

The Crypt

volume 2

DISSECTION
ANCIENT RITES
SENTENCED
O P E T H
MORBID ANGEL
FLEURETY
THERION
MARDUK
IMMORTAL
DEICIDE
EDGE OF SANITY
CRYPTOPSY
DERANGED
MORPHOSIS
PRIMORDIAL
ILLDISPOSED
S I G H
FORLORN
BURZUM
MINDROT

& much, much
more...



Friends! Readers! Metalmen!

Hello, and welcome to the second issue of The Crypt; I hope you are not too disappointed. What you are reading is the fruit of circa twelve months' - give or take - blood, sweat and tears. Well, sweat at any rate. Delayed as anticipated, but fortunately not quite long enough for my interest to have died completely, and hopefully yours neither. I will not even attempt to provide you with a reasonable excuse for my taking so long to get back to you; suffice it to say that I could have worked harder but chose not to. And a good thing this laziness of mine was too, for had I rushed everything again and gone to print last autumn as I'd originally intended the result would have been shoddy and unprofessional. Even more shoddy and unprofessional.

And speaking of shoddy and unprofessional, my apologies for the slightly uninspiring layout this time round. Tragically, my studies haven't really allowed for my relationship with this computer to flourish, and subsequently I have been forced to settle for the time-honoured 'tidy but boring-as-fuck' school of page design. I'd love to be able to venture into the wonderful realm of cut-and-paste once again and may well do so in future, but until then you will have to make do.

I have lost countless illusions since the completion of issue 1 (and, I might add, the better part of issue 2) and subsequently much of my youthful enthusiasm - no mean feat for a youngster like myself. This I can now only regard as a blessing in that I spend far less time squandering money and energy pursuing every underground activity under the sun in the hope of achieving whatever it is you achieve when you become a "scene personality" (tho' it is usually precisely this that these pseudo-celebrities lack). However, I have found my editorial voice and am momentarily quite content with it. If you, the reader, dislike it and would rather read something a little more rational and/or clinical in approach - so be it, but thanks for the support anyway.

Circa half of the interviews featured in this issue are monstrously out of date, the reason for which is perfectly acceptable: they are not mine. I was asked to print them by my good friend Ross Meikle, once the editor of an ill-fated rag called Into the Woods. He shelved the project in early 1994 and with it the scores of already completed interrogations. In the summer of 1995 he retrieved them, blew most of the dust off and passed them on to me. Some I have re-edited and laid out, others I have merely retyped and thrown together at the back of the 'zine. Either they will interest you or they will not, and it is entirely up to you whether or not to read them. Ross' "obligations" to the various bands have been fulfilled, however, as have mine to the man himself, and I would like to thank him now for the orders some of his 'big names' have no doubt attracted. Ha, such deviousness!

Due to the amount of black metal in this issue, it would be quite logical to assume that The Crypt has turned trendy. Or 'with it'. Or good. Or whatever. Well, much as it pains me to disappoint all you budding Satanrockers out there, it has not. Sorry. Fact of the matter is, The Crypt is a metal 'zine, and I will feature anyone who I goddamn feel like in it. Granted, I did not particularly feel like featuring the large majority of acts of a darker, more furrowed-brow nature you will read about in this edition - or wouldn't now - but I assume that most discerning readers will pick up on that or already have. Yes, it was a mistake to include bands whose music I am not wholeheartedly appreciative of, but I've learned from it...

I have no illusions of grandeur or superiority, and I would like to make that clear right now lest you should interpret my idle wanderings of the pen thus. I am merely a heavy metal fan who has decided to share his enthusiasm (although that is hardly the word at the best of times) with a few others. No more, no less. And should my criticisms begin to grate and my opinions annoy then my chosen path of utmost subjectivity will have proven effective. 'Tis and old cliché, I know, but you do have minds of your own and would benefit from using them occasionally.

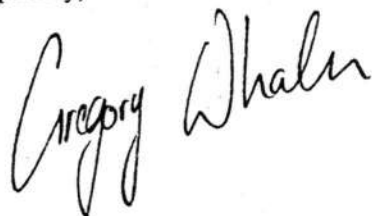
Recently I've been kicking around the idea of setting up a letters page, in case anyone is interested. However, I'm not just looking for an excuse to blow my own trumpet or have others blow it for me - I want real people to write with wit, eloquence or intelligence or all three, preferably, about... things; issues they would like to raise, questions they want to ask and have answered or merely humorous little observations. Basically, anyone that has anything interesting to say for themselves should drop me a line. Your letters, articles, essays, or whatever you want to call them, will then be printed either separately or together in a specific section where they can be read by anybody that cares to. And of course I will print everything I am sent. Unless, that is, I choose not to, which is likely if it concerns politics or religion. I feel strongly about neither, really, and certainly do not feel the need to share my views with people even less likely to agree with than to be interested in hearing about them. For the record, though, I am neither racist nor Satanist. Nor any other kind of 'ist', for that matter, other than perhaps egotist and journalist (which - in effect - are one and the same). I have my own philosophies and lifecodes and see no reason why I should bore you lot with such things.

As for future editions of The Crypt... who knows? Maybe this will even be the last, but I very much doubt it. There are still bands out there that 'click' with me, see, and I intend to interrogate some of these over the next year or so. Their identities will remain secret until I myself find out, but I can tell you right now that they will play heavy fucking metal the way it is supposed to be played. Not that I intend to limit myself, mind you...

By the way, you may or may not have noticed that this rag lacks a news section. Basically, I see little point in having one as The Crypt comes out way too irregularly. However, anyone interested in all the latest goings-on/gossip/bullshit in this shitty scene of ours can have a copy of my newsletter, the outrageously titled Cryptic News, for an SAE or IRC.

All right, that's just about it from me. I am not going to promise a precise release date for number three or even guess at it, but I should have a lot more time on my hands this year. Whether or not it will be spent on the mag remains to be seen, but it will be there... 'Til then I suggest that you rock hard and stay metal!

Yours Cryptically,



Gregory Whalen

Current edit-aural delights:

Autopsy - All
Abscess - "Urine Junkies" CD
Bjork - "Debut" CD
Fleurety - "Min Tid Skal Komme" CD
Dissection - All
Danzig - "4" CD
Slayer - Just about everything, really. What a fucking band!
Opeth - "Orchid" CD
Weezer - "Weezer" CD
Dead Can Dance - "Within the Realm" LP
Dismember - "Like an Everflowing Stream" CD
Arcturus - "Aspera Hiems Symfonia" CD
Green Day - "Dookie" CD
Decoryah - "Wisdom Floats" CD
Portishead - "Dummy" CD
Vader - "De Profundis" CD
Oasis - "(What's the Story) Morning Glory?" CD
Enya - "Watermark" LP
Burzum - "Filosofem" CD
Sadistic Intent - "Resurrection" MCD
Usurper - "Visions from the Gods" demo
Necrophobic - "The Nocturnal Silence" CD
The Gathering - "Mandylion" CD
Therion - "Lepaca Kliffoth" CD
Celtic Frost - Everything pre-gayness
Darkthrone - "Soulside Journey" LP
Manowar - "Kings of Metal" LP
CSSO - Advance CD
In Flames - "Subterranean" MCD
Destruction - "Infernal Overkill" LP
At the Gates - All
The 3rd and the Mortal - "Tears Laid in Earth" CD
Iron Maiden - 1980-1988
Beyond Dawn - "Pity Love" CD

The Crypt was compiled and edited by yours truly.
Contributions came from:

Ross Meikle
Bill Earnshaw
Timo Ketola
Ross Sinclair
Stewart Jardine
Jamie Grimes
Hans Stiles
Martin Kelso
Ali "the Metallion"

I was thinking of dedicating
this issue to the infernal
memory of Euronymous, but
seeing as I didn't know the
guy personally I decided
against it. Instead, I'd like to
pay tribute to my friend Bill
with this short limerick:

*There once was a guy named Bill
Death metal, he thought, did kill
Then one day
His tapes he threw away
Yet some he doth listen to still*

All the best, mate, and thanks
a million for all the support!



Special thanks to:

Bill (again, for the friendship, encouragement, advice, introducing me to Weezer), Ross Meikle, Hans Stiles, Jamie Grimes (for putting up with me all that time in Ireland, not to mention for being a downright excellent person) and my family (especially for tolerating my hogging of the computer).

Thanks and hello (in no particular order) to:

Stimpy and Budweiser the cats, George Ruff (George Barf?), Stewart Jardine (lethargy incarnate), Ross Sinclair, Dave & Kelv (Engulfed), Martin Kelso, Quzzy (Confusion Corporation), John Redfern & Paddy (Evoke), Brian Taube (Deprived), Kenny (Cerebral Earthquake), Svein-Egil Hatlevik (Fleurety), Russ Smith (great review, man, thanks a lot!), Jon (Dissection), Diamanda (Misanthropy), Jeff Wagner (Relapse), Mike Campbell (The Sepulchral Voice), Mark McGowan (Deviation Records), Graeme and Fraser McGartland (Serenade), Big John and Wee Jim (Death Agony), Matt (Revolt), Alan/Naihmass (Primordial), Tomoaki Kanai (CUM/Corporal Arts), Nick Bassett, Paul Carty (The Ninth Circle), Jon Betts (Beyond Fear), Rob (Dawn), Ali "the Metallion" (sorry we lost touch for a while there!), Chris (Morstice), Pete Sandoval (Morbidity Angel), Andrew Sloan, The Good Table (Rhona, Heather, Jo, Lucie and Laura), Julio Rodriguez (Dead Zone), Chris Pervelis (Internal Bleeding), Leini-boy (Sanguinary), Jussi (Crimson Midwinter), Daniel & Magnus (Forlorn/Withered Beauty), the other half of The Banner (Gillian Struthers), Joel (Inverted), Gudmundur (Solstafir), Gabe (Accursed), Morgan & Legion (Marduk), Krzysztof Wasek, Shane Transvaal D (too bad about Gospel of the Horns!), Holy Records, Gunther (Ancient Rites), Andy (Hybemoid), Raffaella and Carlo (Headfucker/Agonia), Grey (Suffering/KFA/CG&D/Bethlehem FC - calm down, you do too much!), Christian Leitch, Aby Martin, Dan (Earache), Adrian (At the Gates), Graham Finney (Intoxicated), Andy (Plastic Head), Per & Wez (Wrong Again Records), Anita Harris, Dave Knickersdown (Dissent/Sullen Putrilege), Radim Chrobok (Jewel/Forgotten Silence), the Computing department, Demonaz (Immortal), Neil (Pogrom), Timo (Dauthus), all the teachers I met over in Berwick (for reminding me how good it is to be from the West Coast), the boys at Progress Records, Vinnie (Morphosis), Stefan (Darkseed), Chris Peters, Stavros (Total Holocaust), Graham can't-remember-your-second-name (my trader-friend from Keighly), everyone I met in Ireland last summer (Stavis, Dave, Ralphie, Marna, Jamie's Ma, etc.), Robert (Aaaaarrrggghhhh!), Laurent (Tanahauzer), Glenn (Desecration), Greg (Esoteric), Stu (Aesthetic Death), Nuclear Blast, Mrs Allison Wilson, Franz Petri and everyone else that has been featured in this issue, helped me out or merely been a mate. Sorry if you're name ain't mentioned but I'm sure there are worse things in life...

Contact me at:

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And please enclose some form of postage if you're just writing for info (a stamp, an IRC, money or whatever) or you won't be getting a particularly speedy reply. Sorry, but I'm just getting too much mail these days. Apologies for the quality of the photos, by the way. Due to reasons too trivial to mention, I was able to scan only a few of them. Maybe next time...

REIGN

r E I G N I N G b L O O D

Quality UK metal has become almost as paradoxical a phrase as, say, Military Intelligence, so naturally it is encouraging to see a band like Reign doing so well for themselves. An extensive introduction should not be necessary, so I will not provide one. All that counts is that I like them. So too, it appears, does Stewart, for it was he who scribbled down a few questions and flung them in the direction of Newcastle, where vocalist/bassist John Cook was preparing to re-enter the studio for the recording of the follow up to 1994's highly acclaimed "Embrace" LP.

Can you introduce each member of the band and give us a brief band history please?

"OK, first off there's me, John, on bass/vocals. Then there's Mark Robinson (aka Robbo) on guitar, Ronnie McLean on drums and Mick Storrie on guitar. We were formed by me and Mick in 1991 and released our "Act of Penance" demo shortly after that. We then did the Underground Titans tour and soon after released our "This Silent Nation" demo, which greatly increased the band's audience. Mausoleum Records were interested in us and after a bit we signed to them and recorded our "Embrace" CD, which was released in Europe in June '94. Since then we've been touring like mad bastards and we're just preparing to record our new CD.

"Embrace" was recorded in late June 1993. Why did it take so long for it to be released? Are you satisfied with it?

"Well, Mausoleum has only recently set up good distro in the UK through Grapevine, so that took time, y'know? In the US, well, we weren't a real priority at first. It's cool now 'cos we've done really well there, which is most ironic, but there y'go, eh? Still, the release for the newie should be a world-wide thing, so that's cool!"

Is there anything about the album you're dissatisfied with and would have preferred to do differently?

"In retrospect, yeah. Some of the songs are too slow, y'know? Also, maybe the mixing isn't great in places, but, y'know, you live and learn. Hopefully by the time album no. 3 comes round I'll be able to critically evaluate no. 2 in

the same way as I can "Embrace". I think we did a really good job on the time and budget we had though, so we're really proud of "Embrace".

What are your lyrics about? Have you ever considered singing about Satan or gore or any of that shit?

"No, not at all. I really like bands that sing about Satan/gore, y'know, but if we did it just wouldn't sound convincing. Each to their own, I say. Most of my lyrics are on an emotional or social basis, mostly a mixture of the two. I sort of vent my frustrations, I guess, but it works fine for us!"

How did the London show with Sinister go? What was the crowd response like?

"Fucking great, man! The crowd was awesome; everyone really enjoyed themselves. We loved it; it was such good fun! The pit ruled! One of the best pits on the tour (Berwick too!), plus we got really good reviews in Kerrang and Terrorizer (hi Russ!),



so it was a huge success for us. Mike at the Devil's Church is doing a fucking great job; hopefully people will continue to support him. Keep it going down there lads!"

You toured Europe with Mortification last year. Do you have any more touring plans at the moment?

"Well, we've just wrapped up another 9-10 UK shows, which were definitely our best yet. We've got three gigs booked after the CD is recorded, then I think we'll have a couple of weeks off. We'll be off to Europe again and hopefully the USA by the end of the year too!"

Are you in contact with any other UK death/thrash bands? Which are your faves?

"Yeah, loads! Well, there's stuff like Gomorrah and Decomposed - great bands! Other stuff I dig: Evoke, Inextremis (RIP), Enchantment, Morstice... loads really! We played with Serenade last night and they blew me away, man! They ruled, fucking great!! All of us really enjoyed their set and they were really cool guys too, Cheers for the Trace Elliott shirt, Graeme; I owe you one!"

What does the future hold for Reign - a new album, a tour...?

"Well, we're off to the studio next week to record our new CD, which is untitled at present. This one is gonna be a killer, as we've tuned down our guitar sound a lot, which gives us a far deeper sound. Also, the new stuff is killer. Really, we can't wait for people to hear it! After that we've got a couple of shows with Solstice, then back to Europe I guess..."

What are you listening to at the moment?

"I'm really into the new Fight CD at the moment. When I got it I was surprised at how

contemporary (read: trendy - Ed) it was! Other than that lately, I've been into Dream Theatre "Awake", Grip Inc. "Power of Inner Strength", Gomorrah "Reflections...", Putrefy's split CD, Rush "Hemispheres"... Loads of stuff really!"

Are you into other styles of music?

"No, not really. I'm a complete metal freak! Everything from trad stuff right up to Grindcore! One of my favourite bands is Rush. They're not really considered metal, so I guess the, Tori Amos and Sisters Of Mercy are the only non-metal bands I like. Robbo is really into a lot of indie stuff like Lush, Breeders, etc. Mike's into all sorts of shit, but Ronnie's more of a metal man."

Have you seen Natural Born Killers? What do you think of the other Tarantino movies like Pulp Fiction, etc.?

"Actually, no! I've been so fucking busy with exams, the band, etc. that I've not had any time! I really like Pulp Fiction though; that's a fucking cool film, awesome!! The interaction between the individual sequences is cool, a killer film!"

Know any good jokes?

"Not clean ones or ones that wouldn't offend Newcastle United fans! I'm a sad bastard Sunderland fan, so I suppose that's a bit of a joke in itself really..."

Right, that is all I have to ask you. Cheers, man! Any last comments?

"Cheers for the interview, Stewart; most appreciated, mate! Good luck with The Crypt, man! To all: Take care, check out our shit and keep an open mind. See ya!"

Reign c/o John Cook, 117 Alice Street, South Shields, Tyne & Weir NG33 5DG, England.



Reign: 100% underground metal!

s e n t e n c e d

Rock and fucking Roll seems to have been the Finnish battlecry for some years now, and Sentenced are one of many bands to have blended this with their own aggressive musical ideas to create something slightly out of the ordinary and just a little bit special.

"Amok", the foursome's follow-up to 1993's storming "North from Here" opus had me spellbound from beginning to end the first time I heard it. An intricately woven blanket of pain, rage and bitterness, it was (and still is) the perfect musical backdrop to a grief-stricken world of angst and confusion. Since then there has been a great mini-CD called "Love and Death" and a new album is in the pipeline.

Here's an interview I did with Taneli Jarva in the spring of '95...

Hi, how's life? Do you get much mail from Scotland and/or the UK in general?

"Life's fine right now. It looks like the summer is finally getting up here, although there was still some snow one week ago. We have received a lot of mail from England and Ireland during the past years, but from Scotland a bit less. So this is one of the few ints I am giving to a Scottish 'zine!'"

The progression you showed on Amok was truly phenomenal; the songs are better written, better structured and a lot more accessible without losing any of their impact. Are you satisfied with the record? What prompted this sudden surge of creativity?

"I don't know for sure. The riffs and the songs that we were writing after the recordings of our second album "North from Here" just didn't sound like anything we'd done before. So we didn't want to cut down this progression that was happening inside the band and we just went for it - did what we felt like without caring about the consequences, like losing "credibility" in the "true" scene. And hell yes, we are fucking satisfied with this record! Maybe we have become more open-minded, maybe we just couldn't have written a better album in the vein of "North..." or maybe it's just fate that impends us to write two albums alike..."

Yeah, 'cos Sentenced is a pretty difficult band to follow. I mean, three albums, three labels, three different styles... Surely these must be pretty costly politics fan-base wise...

"Ha ha, Sentenced is indeed a very difficult band! When we recorded this album in October '94 we didn't have the slightest idea what the label, the fans or the press would think about it, so the only reason we did it was to satisfy ourselves. And that's the only way to do it! The music is primarily for our own pleasure, but when people enjoy it as well it's of course encouraging."

"Without doubt we have lost a lot of the die-hard 100% death metal freaks, but what do I care? If they liked the first records they can keep on listening to those then! I like "Scream Bloody Gore" by Death, although I don't give a shit about their current style!"

How did the Century Media deal come about? It came as quite a surprise to the underground, I imagine, as labels like that tend not to sign death metal bands

these days. Are you happy with the work they've done for you so far?

"What the fuck is shocking about that? Signing to a label like Century only enables our music to reach a lot more people and for us to tour outside Finland because they have the resources to promote the bands unlike the labels we've worked with before. Well, Spinefarm Records is very good here in Finland, but there's not much they can do in the rest of Europe, in the States or Japan. So obviously we are satisfied with Century so far."

"They got interested in our doings around the time of the first album "Shadows of Past" and then they bought the rights of "North..." from Spinefarm for the States and for the rest of Europe (excluding Scandinavia). So that's about it... we signed a four album deal last summer of which "Amok" is the first fruit."

Am I right in thinking that your main influences come from the NWOBHM these days? I mean, what with "The Trooper" and everything... What exactly do you listen to and are you aware of its effect on your music?

"Wrong. The only British bands that might have influenced us in the past are Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Motorhead, so FUCK those so-called NWOBHM thing! I'm sick and tired of hearing that! And when it comes to listening to music, we don't listen to it to adopt influences but to get some kind of satisfaction or whatever. Our influences come from different directions; we are four very different individuals, all with our own personal influences, so they just get mixed in our band's sound. I, for instance, listen to various kinds of music... Grave, Nick Cave, Sisters Of Mercy, Danzig, Type O Negative, Mercyful Fate..."

"Concerning "The Trooper", then, it was a mistake to release that song. It got us this Iron Maiden label on our shoulders and it's not even a good version! We just jammed it in the studio on a warm-up basis during the "North from Here" sessions and eventually it ended up on the EP... Our fault, we could have done it much better."

Personally I find it quite interesting to hear current bands' interpretations of old songs,

though, don't you? Do you think that perhaps more people should celebrate their roots in some way?

"I find it interesting as well, but usually these tribute albums are something other than tributes, they are fucking parodies! Did you hear that Venom tribute? Not the official one with Paradise Lost, etc. but the Swedish CD they did. It's so terrible, aagh! The Black Sabbath tribute too... Some songs work fairly well, but none of them even come close to the originals! The same goes for our "Trooper"; it's more like a mockery than a tribute! So, covers are interesting, yes, but enjoyable? Hardly. Next time we do a cover we'll think it over a few times to be sure that we really can do it and not just piss on our feet again. But creating your own stuff is always more important than re-heating old influences, so if a band can do it the roots can be thrown in the sink! Everyone should do as they feel."

To me, "Amok" is a much more emotional album than its predecessors. Do you agree?

"Both hatred and depression are emotions. Both "North..." and "Amok" are emotional, they just cover different areas of feelings. Whereas "North..." was 100% hatred, aggression and violence its follower "Amok" is depression, frustration, pessimism, anger, grief, realism, and hatred, aggression and violence. It's an album about what we know and what we feel. Pessimism = Realism."

Profound. Does the title hold any significance? I presume it has something to do with emotions and the suppression thereof; emotions perhaps individually examined in each song...

"The human mind can hide some very frightening things inside. If you keep them inside they'll just accumulate and breed more. On day it'll all burst out and there's nothing you can do to stop it. This album is a lyrical amok-run for me, it's an outlet for the chaos inside and outside, but I promise it won't be limited to this release. We have so much more to give in the future."

Do you still play any of the old demo or debut LP tracks at rehearsals?

"We sometimes might play a song or two from "Shadows..." but those songs are quite worn out nowadays, they didn't survive the run of time as compositions. Not to mention "When Death Joins Us", ha! I wonder if we could remember one riff from those times. That was the first Sentenced studio recording!"

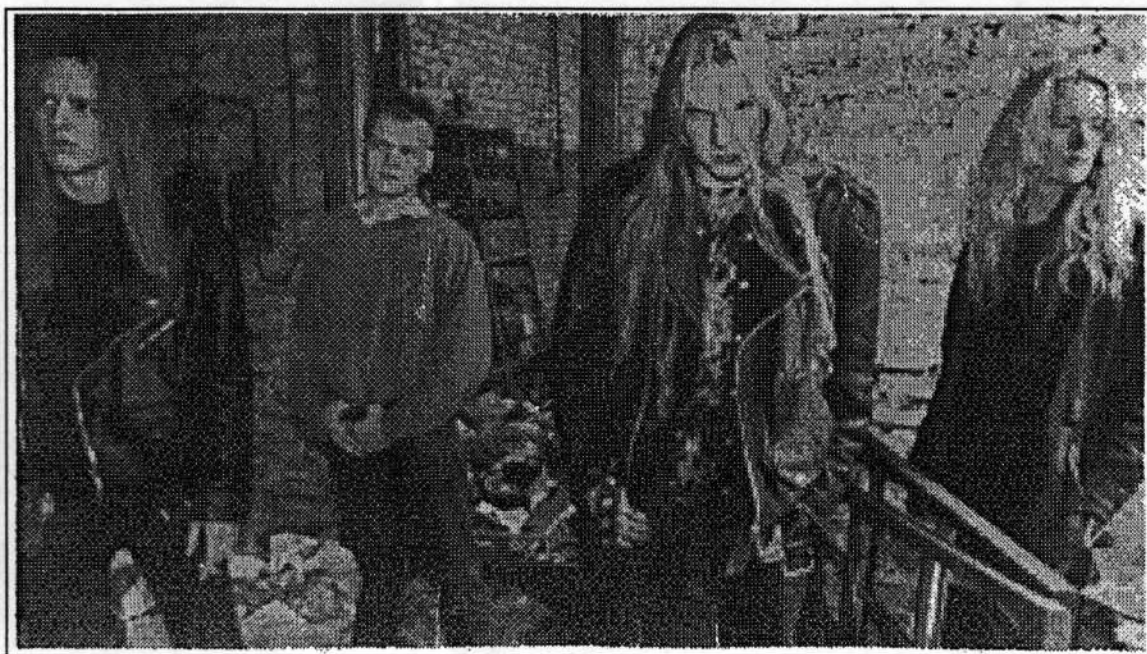
Here are some Maiden questions to annoy you... Which is your favourite album and why? Wouldn't you agree that everything post "SSOTSS" is quite frankly lame, bollock-chewing clag? Was it smart to carry on after the departures of Smith and Brucie? Oh, and covers... which is your favourite?

"Oh fuck... "Killers" was the very first heavy metal album I got so it's very close to me. It's the record that got me into music in the first place, plus I like Paul Di'Anno's voice as well. All their albums are good until "Seventh Son...". About what they have done after then I don't care at all... it's a dead horse they are riding. I don't think they can survive another replacement of the singer. After all, most fans learned to know Bruce Dickinson, just like the first James Bond generation got to know Sean Connery as the real 007. Then again, I got to know the 007 of Roger Moore... Maybe the youngest fans will accept Blaze B. as the new front figure of Maiden, I know I won't, but we'll see... The best release by Iron Maiden is, and will remain, "Live after Death". It's a perfect compilation of the time when they were at their best. It's also got the best cover, aaaaah."

This unfortunately brings us to the end of what was rather a pleasant wee chat, so finish off by telling us a bit about your plans and goals for the rest of '95.

"Thanks for the good and informative interview. We just came from a European tour with Samael and we'll spend the summer writing and rehearsing new material. The next release is possibly a new EP/mini-LP in the fall, then a new tour I hope. As for new material, I can only say that, he he, we'll always be heading forward. You'll see..."

Sentenced c/o Taneli Jarva, Pikkitie 11, 90550 Oulu, Finland.



FORLORN

Think Sweden. Think doom. You're probably already thinking about Candlemass. Now think epic and melodic doom with folk, black, death and classical elements. Although you probably don't know it, you're already thinking about Forlorn. Whilst "Waves of Sorrow", the band's third demo, does echo Candlemass in places, there's far, far more to Forlorn than just that. They've managed to combine that classic '80s sound with the fiery crispness of the leading (northern) lights in today's black and death metal scene, creating an exciting and fresh... Fuck it. I'm not going to waste any more time trying to persuade you how good they are. If you still aren't convinced by the end of this interview I did with Daniel Bryntse (drums) it's your own stupid fault! Now fuck off and iron your flares or polish your doomcross or something. Hippie.

Hello Daniel. Describe the view from your window. How's about introducing yourself and your bands to the readers, who are probably asking themselves just who the fuck you are?

"Hi Gregory! I'm sitting on the floor of my bedroom and when I look out of the window I can see the roof of the neighbouring house, part of a tree and the darkened, cloudy sky. I was born in 1974, started to listen to hardrock/metal music when I was 6 or 7, bought my first guitar when I was 15 and my first drum kit when I was 16. I've played in various bands in the past; these are: Stench (death metal), Terrorerx (Thrash), Diction (pre-Forlorn), Complicity (pre-Withered Beauty), Deep Forest (black/doom), Heimdall (Viking rock) and a few others. Right now I'm involved in Autumn Leaves (doom), Februari-93 (folk music/metal something...) and Windwalker (epic metal, I think...) as project bands, and Forlorn (doom) and Withered Beauty (melodic death/black) a little more serious. Oh, I almost forgot: I have another project band called Midnatt (black metal). The most serious band, Forlorn, was formed in 1991. We have released three demos, but only the latest one is worth mentioning. It's called "Waves of Sorrow" and contains 35 minutes of epic music, divided up into 5 songs. So far we've only received positive reviews. We've been on a comp. CD and a few comp. tapes. We've been in contact with a few labels, but nothing has been signed. We're still waiting for the right deal. Meanwhile, why not buy our demo? We're 100% honest, so you've nothing to fear! As with a lot of other bands, we've been through some line-up changes, but now I think we have a stable one. The band members are: Christer Olsson - guitar & screams, Per Sandgren - guitar, Magnus Bjork - lead vocals & additional guitar, Daniel Bryntse (me) - drums & backing vocals & screams, and a new member Henrik Lindenmo - bass guitar. We're aged 16-21. I don't really know what more to say. This has already grown to be an incredibly long answer..."

Fucksake, it most certainly has! Anyway, doom bands, unlike their black and death metal counterparts, are relatively thin on the ground in Sweden, which is surprising really, considering your country gave birth to Candlemass and Count Raven. Firstly, why

do think this is and secondly, have you found it difficult to establish yourselves in such a seemingly doom-hostile environment?

"I don't really know why there are so few playing this sort of music. I really can't come up with a good answer. There's a lot of people listening to this kind of music, but they all seem to be satisfied with listening. Maybe it's because this kind of music is actually hard to make and play. Anyone can tune down his/her guitar and make some death metal music, but it's difficult to make it heavy with some melody. Maybe it's because of the lack of good vocalists, I don't really know. The greatest problem is that most people into metal music like it fast! Over to the second part of your question... Well, we've been around since '91 and have only played outside our hometown about 4 or 5 times. As you said, there are only a few doom bands around, but most of them are really good! The competition sure exists... On a friendly level of course."

A tired question, I know, but who or what influences you?

"We have since the beginning been influenced by everything we hear, feel or see. Of course this changes with time, but Forlorn will always be doom, although we have other elements in our music. We want to keep the music interesting by keeping all doors open."

Could you give us some insight into your lyrics and the inspirations behind them? I presume "Moonstone" is some sorta epic tale of bravery, yeah? What do you think about bands who preach to their fans like Biohazard or Mortification?

"Firstly, we've got lyrics that deal with loneliness, sorrow, love, hate and life/death in general. These lyrics are mostly inspired by ourselves. Emotions, experiences, thoughts, etc., but some are totally fictitious. Secondly, we have these kind of tales inspired by fantasy role-plays like Dungeons & Dragons, etc. and fantasy tales by Tolkien and others. Thirdly, some lyrics questioning religion and the meaning of life (mainly older lyrics). You're right about "Moonstone". It's about a person who searches all corners of the world to find the Moonstone - the source of all good powers - to gain strength and knowledge to conquer evil. When we enter the story, he (or she) has just entered the castle where he'll find it, after almost a lifetime of searching and fighting. I think it's up to each and everyone to decide what they want to write about, but I don't have to like it..."

There are a fair few folk elements in your music, something which has become increasingly common in Scandinavian metal of late. Why look back instead of forwards? Your views, please, on fellow folksters In The Woods..., In Flames, Storm and The 3rd and the Mortal. Do you know what a teacher is? Oh yeah, and tell us a bit about Februari-93.

"Why not look back? Some of the old, traditional music and classical music is still the best music ever written. In The Woods...: Awesome! Without a doubt a masterpiece that can be compared to the music that was written by the classical composers a long way back in time. In

Flames: Excellent! Some of the songs are genius! The vocals could have been better (especially the female vocals). Februari-93 has also done "Hargalaten" ages before In Flames! Storm: Quite good actually. They should have taken more time arranging the songs. It's a bit boring when guitars and vocals are the same all the way... The 3rd and the Mortal: Excellent! Not as good as In The Woods..., but close. The vocals are the best with this band. Their new vocalist is just as good as the old one. I don't know what a Teuchter is (what is it?) (That's for us Scots to know, Danny-boy, and you to find out - Ed). Februari-93 is a project by me (bass, vocals), Crister (guitar) and Magnus (drums) from Forlorn. We started the project because of our love for traditional music. We mainly play Swedish folk songs (in our own way), but also a few others with the same kind of feeling. What more can I tell you?"

Well, you can tell me whether or not the fast parts that were mixed in with the slower, epic passages on "Waves of Sorrow" were designed to break the mould, to show people that doom metal doesn't necessarily have to be played at a snail's pace...

"Well, we just do the music we like to do.

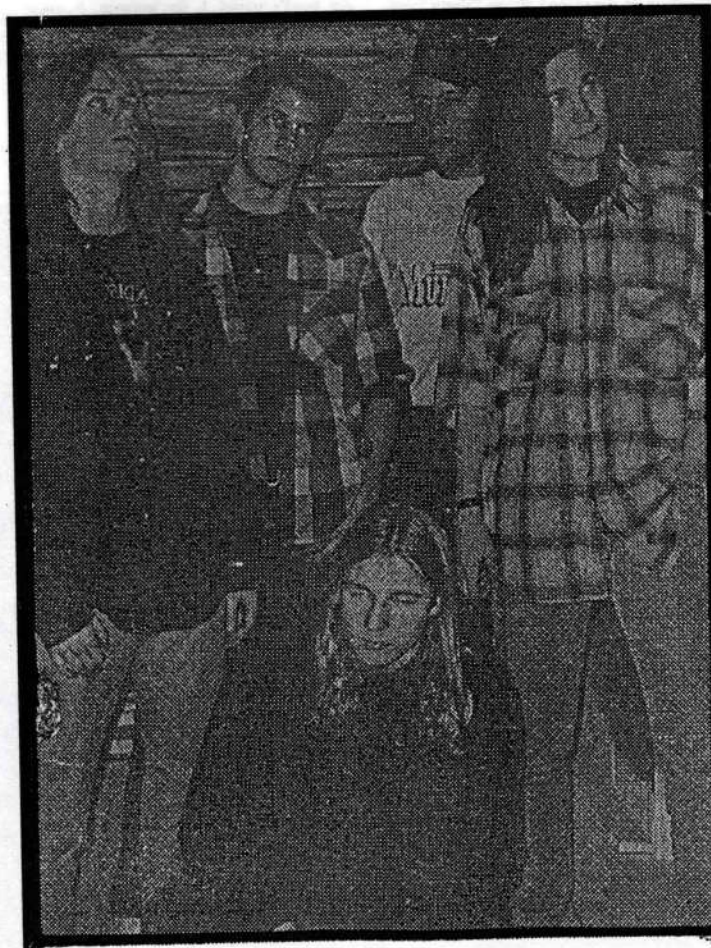
Sometimes we want to play slow and sometimes fast. That's the way it is. If people like it, that's great, otherwise we don't really care."

It's pretty obvious that Forlorn doesn't really sound like the stereotypical Swedish band of the early '90s. Do you reckon there still is a concrete Swedish sound or have people broadened their horizons sufficiently to eradicate any possible categorisations? Big words abound tonight, eh?

"A fuckin' difficult question to answer. Let's face it... There are a lot of bands playing this "new" kind of melodic death metal, but they all still sound different from each other (Bollocks - Ed). Anyway, it's impossible for all bands not to sound like each other at times. There are only six strings on a guitar and thousands of bands... Hey! What do you think? Maybe it's easier for you to answer this question as you have a totally different perspective than me..."

Tricky one. Well, I think the underground supermarket is both big and well-stocked enough for us all to pick and choose. After all, everyone has the right to play the music they like. I am getting a bit sick of all this widdly metal though... Anyway, moving on, many people listen to doom metal to alleviate depression. Is this the case when you are writing and playing the stuff too or is it more of a passive effect, i.e. do you actually get depressed?

"To start with, I don't get depressed when I write/play the music. Sometimes I might be depressed when I start writing music, but that's not necessary. I just happen to like the mellow and sad stuff. Of course music brings out emotions from me, but when I make a riff that is really sad and depressive which I'm satisfied with, I feel warm inside. It's a kind of love! The same when I listen to something really sad and emotional. That's what it's all about... Emotions! Some songs can make me feel sad and depressed, but still I am happy. Hard to explain..."



Forlorn 1994: Daniel stands furthest to the left, admiring Uncle Svein's insulation work.



What can we expect from Forlorn in the future? Do you think you're ready for a CD?

"Well, a few months after we recorded the demo, we were going in a more epic and depressive direction, and I believe that's where we will stay. But we will for sure continue with including odd elements and developing our sound. Unfortunately, I'm not a fortune teller. We'll see what happens, won't we? Comparing with other bands that have released CDs... Yes! I believe we're ready for a CD, but we are not in a hurry. It's never good to rush things."

You have a helluva lot of other projects on the go at the moment, something which is not uncommon for Swedish musicians these days. Why do you think there are so many project bands around? Do you not think that it would be far more interesting and challenging to try and distil all of the different styles and influences into one or two bands as opposed to spreading them out over four or five projects? Not that I'm against all this creativity or anything, it was just a thought...

"I have no idea why there are so many project bands in Sweden. Since I'm unemployed I've got a hell of a lot of time. In a band you are a few members, all with different personalities, etc. What I'd like to do maybe someone else won't. That's why I'm involved with a few other projects. The only project started by me is Autumn Leaves. If we incorporated all the bands' music (including the projects of the other members) into one band the music would be impossible to listen to because of the HUGE variation we've got when it comes to music taste. People wouldn't understand it. No, one band - one style."

Doom metal, one could say, originated in the UK with Black Sabbath and has grown and flourish since with the likes of Paradise Lost, Cathedral, My Dying Bride, Anathema, etc. Which are your favourite UK bands, with whom are you in contact and which would be your ideal touring partners over here? Oh, and what did you think of that Mourn demo I taped you?

"Favourite UK acts: Solstice, Cradle Of Filth, Cathedral (early) and My Dying Bride (early, until he tried to sing in a "clean" way. Sounds terrible!). I'm in contact with Serenity, Our Haunted Kingdom, Ashen Mortality, Chapel Of Rest, Esoteric, Gommorah, Blessed Realm, Evoke and maybe some more. I would like to tour with anyone really! Preferably with a well known band like My Dying Bride, Paradise Lost, Cathedral, etc. I actually had the Mourn tape already. I think the music is excellent, but the vocals isn't really my favourite... Hopefully it's better on the record."

Back when Sabbath started out they would hardly have been able to perceive what it was that they had started, being so far ahead of their time. Do you think there is anyone who is similarly misunderstood and/or underrated around today? And don't say Forlorn.

"Of course they didn't have any idea at all what they started back then. I can't think of anyone in the same situation today. Hmm... no!"

Why does Magnus look so wrecked on the photograph you sent? Was it merely a picture taken at just the wrong moment or does he enjoy drug and alcohol abuse? Your opinions, please, on drugs in general (all kinds) and the case for the legalisation thereof.

"Ha ha ha! He really was upset when he heard that I sent you the photo. But what should I do? It was the only one I had left! This photo was taken directly after Magnus had smoked 4 or 5 OBs and drunk 3 or 4 bottles of Vodka! No, it wasn't a photograph taken at the wrong moment! Poor Magnus... The only drug I've tried, and will ever try, is alcohol. No, I don't like drugs at all. I will not destroy myself with stuff like that. I've seen what drug abuse can do to a man and I don't like it!!! No legalisation for drugs! Well, except for alcohol! (Daniel, I hate to break it to you, man, but alcohol is already legal. I don't know how it is in Sweden, but... duh. - Ed)"

Uh-oh, I feel a weird question coming on... Which species do you reckon would come forth and dominate were mankind to become extinct overnight?

"What kind of a question is this?!! (A jolly good one, fuckface! - Ed) How the hell would I know? Maybe the mighty mosquitos (how do you spell that?) (mosquitos - Ed) will take over the world. They've already done that in Sweden. I hate those ugly, blood-sucking bastards!"

Hey, Danny-boy... are you deep?
"Am I deep? What do you think? I can't swim. HELP! I am myself, no one else..."

This is getting silly. Ask me a question, seeing as I can't think of any sensible ones.

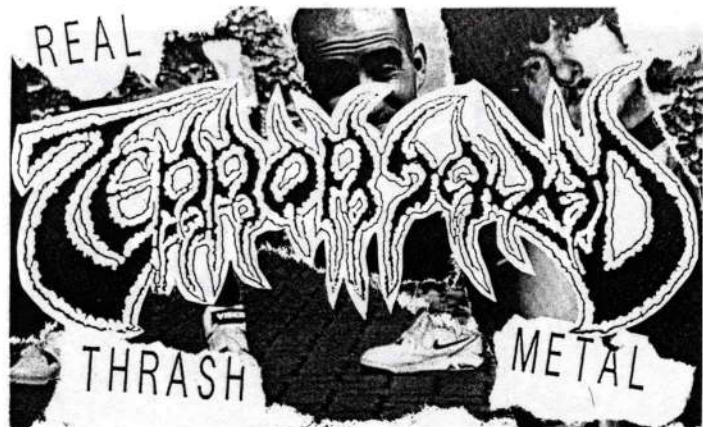
"What do you want me to ask? Can you tell me why black metal bands always want to have such lousy sound quality? Can you tell me why some bands put more work and effort into making a nice looking cover rather than making good music? I've always wondered..."

Well, rare few know the true answers to your questions and I am not one of them. If anyone out there is please get in touch! Owt to add?

"ENJOY LIFE - you only have one! Who cares what I think? No one... Everyone? YAHOO! I just killed one of those ugly, blood-sucking bastards! Now it's time to sleep, good night!"

(Written with a different pen and in far more legible handwriting): "Good Morning! It's no good to be awake half the night to answer your interview. Some tripped out and tired answers at the end."

Forlorn c/o Daniel Bryntse, Runstensvagen 77, 804 33 Gavle, Sweden.



Now, when Rosco Sinclair of RIP 'zine said on the phone that he'd interviewed a Japanese thrash band for me I was probably even more sceptical than you are reading this now. I couldn't have been more surprised, however, when I got a copy of Terror Squad's 1994 demo "The Birth of a New Rage" and found myself scraping the sparse contents of my head off the wall within moments of hitting the play button. The thing just reeks of Dark Angel and that is meant in the best possible way. So, rid yourselves of your prejudices, dig out those Puma boots and Tankard shirts from the bottom of your wardrobes and read on!

First question, first choice: How come you guys are still playing Thrash when there's so much death metal about? Do you think that there is still a market for the thrash thing? A kinda cheeky question there.

"I see underground thrash scene is not so prosperous as it used to be. But it is not a problem for us. We will continue playing as a thrash metal band!"

How's the new tape selling? What pushed the band to create the title "The Birth of a New Rage"? Is this anything to do with all this new age spiritual stuff going about just now?

"About two hundreds. We hope that you can see us as a new corner of quite raging fucking thrash band!"

What's the current thrash/death/grind scene like in Japan? And gigs, have you played many? Got any interesting tales to tell about Terror Squad live on stage?

"On stage we play with banging head round and round! (Rock on, Kouichi! - Ed) But lately we can't have gigs because of member changes. We did audition of a new drummer a few weeks ago."

Speaking of live gigs, how do you think Terror Squad would go down playing with a) Grave b) Ice T. c) Anthrax?

"a) - Grave - b) - Ice T. - c) - Anthrax DARK ANGEL!!!"

What kind of things do the members of Terror Squad like to get up to in their spare time? I guess there are many gorgeous Japanese girls to have fun with? What about European girls - ever fancied licking one out?

"European girls are fascinating! Please send us a few girls!"

What future plans do you have? Are you busy preparing new songs for another demo? Any label response to the tape?

"Couple of labels give response for us. We concentrate on composition."

What do you think about the new Slayer LP? What's your favourite LP just now?

"Slayer is still Slayer, but atmosphere which I felt when I heard their old stuff is lack this time. Nokturnal's "Nothing but Hatred" is killer!"

OK - gotta go and get going!!! Have fun. Two things to ask of you here: a) Please give us your favourite Japanese recipes b) Please ask the editor of The Crypt some questions... THANX!!

"Thanx for the interview. Try to make your great 'zine harder and harder (what, and borrow Rosco's patented Stay-Hard spray? No thanks! - Ed). a) Sushi is great!! b) What do you think about Japanese?"

Ed: Err... Hnm. You're a bunch of sick fucks and you eat raw fish which, essentially, is the same thing.

Terror Squad c/o Kouichi Udagawa, 4-11-13, Kasuya Setagayaku, Tokyo 157, Japan.





One of the few American bands I really enjoy is Accursed. Their dark and morbid death metal for me ranks among the finest of its kind Stateside, and that means Divine Eve, Crucifier and Order From Chaos. The young threesome isn't necessarily similar to these bands musically, but definitely in the same ballpark in terms of attitude and outlook. A few listens of their second demo "A Curse Called Life" was enough to persuade me that they belonged in The Crypt...

They have a debut CD out now on Visceral Productions, so look out for that!

Hi Gabe, how's it going? What are you listening to and what have you done so far today?

"Things are going good, but I'm quite ill today. I'm listening to our new 7" tracks which we finished last Sunday. I haven't done anything productive yet today."

It's been ages since "A Curse Called Life" came out. What have you been up to since then?

"Well, we kicked our old vocalist out, went through some rough times and recorded a one-song promo called "Lament", plus our new tracks for our upcoming 7". I do all the vocals now plus keyboards and bass."

I think it's great that you're going against the flow by playing true death metal, although you label yourselves black/death, which I find a little trendy...

"Yes, we are not scared of going against the flow, we will not sell out whatsoever! I admit, "A Curse Called Life" was a bit death metal, but our newer stuff is so much better. The new songs all have keyboards, better vocals and better lyrics. Everything is just so much better with the new line-up. We feel, or I feel, our music is black/death, but like our biography says, call us what you wish."

I will and I'll still call you death metal. Death metal, incidentally, which I find more akin to the Swedish variety than your average American Suffocore. Would you agree that Unleashed are an influence? Who else... Acheron perhaps?

"No, I won't agree we sound like Unleashed because I rarely listen to them. Yes, we do use some Swedish type riffing, and black metal and death metal and many other forms of music. We do not take our influences from one form of music. We all listen to black/death, but other forms of music as well. I do not like Acheron, so they're not an influence. Some of our favourite bands are Cradle Of Filth, Emperor, Ancient Rites, Dismember, NIN and so many more, and not all death metal."

very popular in the States and is it just the old Carnage sound you like or do you also enjoy the likes of Dark Tranquillity?

"Well, to some degree. I think the newer stuff is more popular due to so many bands selling out (Entombed, Carcass, etc., etc.), but the older, godly albums are not that popular, and I'm glad. I hate most American death metal. I think it's dead or dying. People want more in a band these days, more mature topics and better song structures and riffing. Dark Tranquillity are gods! I worship the vintage Carnage sound as well."

On the "ACCL" sleeve I have all the addresses bar yours are scored out. I take it that this means you've had some line-up problems. How do the new vocals compare to Ryan's brutal growls?

"Yes, all the addresses were scored out except mine. Ryan got kicked out and was a rip-off, Joe and Jeremy left their old house and moved closer to my house, where we practice. Ryan is a rip-off, life metal trend, who claimed so much but did so little. He stole money, merchandise and trust from us, so fuck him and everyone associated with him! I do all the vocals now and they're much better than Ryan's "Death metal, kill for Satan" crap. Personally I hated his brutal(?) growls on "A Curse Called Life" and they

were even worse on our first demo "Horror Within".

Did you play many shows with the old line-up? How is the local gig scene?

"With the old line-up we played about ten shows and they all went bad (mostly due to Ryan's childish behaviour), so I've grown to hate shows and haven't played live in about eight months. Hopefully we'll do some decent shows this summer, but if not I don't really care. The scene here sucks and the bands fight like kids, so not much goes on. There is no death metal scene here at all and our local metalfest has turned into commercial garbage."

Something I admire about Accursed is the fact that you place far more of an emphasis on writing good, catchy riffs than grinding mindlessly. Don't get me wrong, I love speed in my metal, but blast beats wear thin after a while, don't you think?

"Yes, we try to write good riffs and music that is original and different from other American bands who go for gore and death topics. I hate blast beats, but I do love the kick/snare bit. It must be controlled, though, and not overdone. If a band does it right it creates a very dark and chaotic atmosphere. Bands like Cradle Of Filth, Emperor and Mayhem do it very well, whereas some of the new Darkthrone does wear a bit thin."

You mentioned one of my not-so-favourite bands there, Cradle Of Filth. Like them, you seem to take a healthy interest in vampirism, judging by the lyrics on "A Curse Called Life". What's your favourite Dracula movie? What are your thoughts on Cradle Of Filth and the current worldwide black metal trend in general?

"Yes, we do take a healthy interest in vampirism and dark topics, but all the lyrics on "A Curse Called Life" were written by Ryan except for "Psalm of a Dead Dreamer" which Joe wrote. We do not play any of these anymore except "Psalm...". My favourite Dracula movies are Subspecies, Coppola's version and Interview with the Vampire by Anne Rice. I like Cradle Of Filth very much and am in contact with Robyn, who now plays in a new band, December Moon, which is godly as well. The black metal trend is dying now a bit, which is good, and "Scandinavian darkness" is the best, most atmospheric music in the world today. As for the trendy bands, do not worry: they will not last long and do help somewhat to support our scene."

Your demo was reviewed in the ninth issue of Terrorizer. What do you think of the mag and is there an American equivalent? Pit perhaps... Maybe fanzines are best at covering death and black metal anyway, huh?

"The magazine is good and has an open mind (which no US mags have, so they're not worth mentioning), but they never responded to my letter. There are some good fanzines from here and Pit is the only good mag, but it's hard to get them. Yes, I think 'zines are better at covering black/death, but it's nice to see that some of the good bands are getting bigger."

What do you get up to when you're not busy with Accursed? Do you have to work to subsidise your underground activities? What's the unemployment situation like in Wisconsin?

"I don't do much else. I try to relax or work on my artwork. I go to high school, but will be going to an art college next year. During the summer I don't do much else but work and the band. The unemployment situation is bad and our politics are fucked up. I hate America, even though I was born here. Yes, I work 3-4 days a week to support the band and my other interests as well (stereo equipment, art stuff, autos...)"

How much mail are you getting these days? Are you into tape trading or anything?

"I get about three or four letters a day, sometimes more, sometimes less. I work with Accursed and Accursed is my life, so I rarely fall behind with mail. I used to trade a lot, but now it's hard to afford it. If the band is good or we are being distributed, I will trade."

What are your plans for the rest of '95?

"We've just signed to Visceral Productions for a comp. CD, 7" and CD. The comp. and 7" will be out very soon and T-shirts later on this year. "Lament" will only be available until the comp. is released because it will be on the CD. I'll keep you informed on release dates, etc., or look for flyers soon."

Last words?

"Thanks for the interview, I hope all goes well. Everyone write for more info, etc. Look out for new material soon. Hail the forgotten gods..."

Accursed c/o Gabe Catanzaro, 3516 Menomonee River Parkway, Wauwatosa, WI 53222, USA.





One of the more gifted UK death metal bands just happens to be Scottish. Engulfed is their name, and death metal - like I said - is their game. A rather poor debut demo called "Murder Most Foul" has just been followed up by a tape so uncompromising in its fuck-off heaviness and brutality that it wipes the floor with the large majority of currently circulating competitors.

Harking back to the good ol' days of Asphyx, Grave and Dismember (and particularly the latter), "Castellated Architecture" is no-frills ugliness and barbarity taken to new, i.e. old, levels of extremity. Let's not get carried away here, though... Engulfed still have a lot of growing to do, but where they're at now suits me just fine, and that is why I chose to interview vocalist and guitarist Dave Wood.

So, Dave, an interview for The Crypt at last! Seeing as hardly anyone reading this will be familiar with Engulfed, I think you'd better start off with a band history. What motivated you to form the band - was it a particular gig or record?

"Yippee, starting in Greg's great media fabric at last (tee-hee) (all right, we'll have less of the sarcasm - Ed). Well, let's start in the mists of yesteryear... While deeply into thrash and that new wave of godly extreme bands (Napalm, Morbid Angel, Deicide), I met up with an old mate, Chris, and we used to jam covers of those bands in the back hall of his local church! Me on guitar/vocals, Chris on drums. We were first called Mortis, then changed to Carrion. I year later I met our drummer who then introduced me to Kelv at a sprightly young age of 26, had a few jams then formed Cythraul (April '92). After a bit of to-ing and fro-ing with members we split up for 8 months and reformed as Engulfed, truncating the array to a 3-piece. We will continue our musical adventure as Engulfed for many moons to come."

To say that demo number two, "Castellated Architecture", is a progression from your debut "Murder Most Foul" would be as gross an understatement as saying that Claudia Schiffer is a fairly attractive woman or that Benediction are getting a bit tedious. What triggered this gigantic leap forward, and was it a gigantic leap at all or more a series of small but steady steps towards all-round death metal greatness?

"Jings... crivens... what a cool remark to hear! A big bag of skunk your way!! I think it was really a series of small steps, seeing as the three of us are spread across Scotland (Dave H. in Edinburgh, Kelv working in Glasgow and me in the centre of hills, trees and rivers in Galashiels). We have quite irregular rehearsals, maybe once every week or two. Certainly the interest and thought was there to do this but it just took practice to perfect it."

Judging by the guitar sound on the new tape, you're quite some fan of the early nineties Stockholm scene...

"Yeah, Stockholm rules! Ever since "Left Hand Path" and "Like an Everflowing Stream" were released the guitar sound has stuck to me like sticky toffee."

Do you think Engulfed have found their own identity yet, and is this vital in these days of overcrowding or is style and class more important?

"Yes, I think it's safe to say we've discovered our sound/identity now, and it's here to stay. I think it is important to find your sound and stick to it through wind, rain and fire because only then will the crappy nonsense bands be doing some other trend and quickly die off."

Seems to me you're trying to recreate a long-forgotten feeling. Am I right in thinking that you share my yearning for that early nineties vibe of Grave, Autopsy, Asphyx and Carnage in your metal of death?

"Yes Greg, you, me and Bill will have to start construction on our time machine to whisk us back to early 1990 AD so that we can re-live three years of probably the best get-into/aggression/fuck music of all time. I am pleased to announce you can rely on Engulfed to reflect this era as well as adding progressive new ideas in the future. As always, music (doom/thrash/black/death) goes round in circles and each time it appears again it has new things added. This is our era and we'll continue to pursue it for ages, continuing to make it more extreme each time. Then again, we might start doing covers of "Common People" (Pulp), "Country House" (Blur) and "Wonderwall" (Oasis), ho ho ho!!!"

Well, I don't know... the last one would be quite interesting to hear... Anyway, enough Britpop! Would you care to enlighten us a little regards the lyrics on the new demo? How important are they to you? Half of them are some sort of a medieval concept, right? How the hell did you come up with that idea? Explain, please.

"Correct. Well, castles are one of my many fascinations, as well as military stuff. So, after scanning through my books (castle ones - not jazz mags), I got writing. The first track ("Castellated Architecture") is describing the castle in looks, the second ("With Mace and Sword") is about the preparation of attack, and the third ("Feudal Times") is the battle and aftermath, so there you go. The lyrics are 100% important. The music comes first and the words are usually last on my mind (taking a leaf out of Chris Reifert's book). The themes concerning the other songs are slightly varied: "The Horned God" is loosely based on a 2000 AD story, "Smell of Death" is about severe nuclear devastation

(whoohoo, that sounds like some kinda Music For Nations mutant! - Ed), and "Inferno" is telling the story of Kelv's old bedroom fire antics with a few imaginary corpses thrown in for good measure."

You've done a fair bit of gigging over the years. Have you met many bands that share your main principles and ideas? Which have been your most memorable shows to date and why?

"Yes, we've done 30 live shows to date. Most of the bands we've met share the same enjoyment of playing live, especially Reign - cool guys. There have been a lot of excellent gigs, including Esoteric & Inverted, Evoke, Morstice, Cerebrum & Intoxicated (deathfest), 4 Past Midnight, Confusion Corporation & Death Agony (Glasgow deathfest), Ordog & Defaced, plus tons of others. I think the shows with Salem Justice were top class and a one-off gig in my hometown where the pub was 'torn apart' (excuse the pun)."

Which bands do you see fit to continue the death metal legacy and is there much hope for the genre, given its limitations? Which have been your favourite albums over the past year or so?

"Hmm... tricky one, this. I think I have to take my hat off to Morbid Angel for being in my eyes the best band in keeping as close to their roots as possible. Nearly every other band from their starting period have taken off on another road. Some have proved popular, some crashed. If a band sticks to its roots as well as injecting some original and new ideas. They should survive for a long time, and this is Engulfed's aim."

How do you rate the current Scottish scene? It's fairly weak, to say the least, but do you think there is any possibility of it improving with support from bands and venues dwindling like it is?

"The Scottish scene is small but it is friendly as well. The bands that we do have each play their own individual thing and style like Confusion Corporation, Cerebral Earthquake, Ordog, Serenade, Korpse, Death

Agony, Defaced, Intoxicated, etc. We are all in contact with each other in some way, and there is no bickering over who is the best band, just helping each other out with promotion, gigs and stuff. Then again, the bands are really spread out over the landscape of Scotland with lots of hills between us. Maybe the scene here was meant to be small?"

Would you be so kind as to share with us your plans for the future? Will you be recording a bit more? Only it seems like it has been gigs, gigs, gigs for the past year...

"We hope to be around for a long time yet, play tons more gigs (overseas maybe?), try and work our way up for a 7", more demos and rehearsal tapes to come and to try and build up a known presence in the worldwide underground scene. '95 was a year of live shows for us; in '96 we are going to work on more recording stuff, more distribution and billions of flyers."

Umm, well... That's pretty much all I can think of to ask you. Leave us by 'selling' the new demo to our readers, please. Oh, and feel free to add whatever else you want.

"Ta very much for the interview, Greg. Very good questions, ones that make you think first. Okay, this time quality is paramount. For your well-earned £3/\$5 (US) you get a professional recording of 6 new/unreleased tracks of heavily Swedish influenced, straight forward, no bullshit, in-your-face death metal. Guaranteed aggressive, in the vein of early Dismember/Entombed with a hint of Eucharist and a Scottish proudness lavishly displayed in a tough, durable pro-printed cover/inlay as well as a big additional lyric/thanks list sheet. Remember, there are special rates for distro services bulk buying. Any bands wishing gigs in our area can contact our bass player through me at the given address. Okay, that's about it... Come and check us out if we are playing live near you. Hello to all my mates and bands over the UK. See ya!"

Engulfed c/o Dave Wood, 206 Croft Street, Galashiels TD1 3BB, Scotland.





Love 'em or hate 'em, there is no denying that Abruptum are one of the most obscure and least understood outfits around today. Personally speaking, I find little pleasure in listening to their "music", but I respect it and Evil's fierce quest for individuality and their continuing refusal to conform to the moral majority's ideas of normality. They released two albums on Deathlike Silence Productions and have just graced us with a third on the American Full Moon Productions. Ross interviewed his former pen-friend It shortly before platter number two came out and mutilated us all...

If you like the band this rare exchange will be something of a treat for you and if not then no one is forcing you to read on. Make up your own mind...

I was surprised when your LP was released on DSP, as in a previous interview I had read that this was not to be. What made you change your mind and what has the response to the debut album been like?

"There was some trouble. DSP is one of the world's most "Abruptum deserving" record companies today. The response is frightening 'cause I really didn't think people would dare to buy and listen to our LP, but they do. I don't know if they really understood the message that this is not for everyone and if people got that there is a risk to buy it. Anyway, they do and that is up to them. I was only wondering."

Will your future releases be on DSP? How many copies of the debut have you sold and have you made much money from it?

"Our next LP will be out DSP. It is called "In Umbra Malitiae, In Aeternum In Triumpho Tenebrarum" and as always I am very pleased to let people of a true kind get the evil injection they need. "Obscuritatem" has sold much and yes, we do get a huge amount of money, but we can never get too well paid."

Is the "Evil" 7" still available and did they all come with a sticker?

"It is not available anymore. I believe it was only pressed in 500, so it's very hard to get. They include a sticker. The EP will be released on LP with Abruptum along with the two demos. The LP will be out on Obscure Plasma Records late this year or next... we'll see. By the way, have you heard of the 120-125 wrongly pressed "Obscuritatem" LPs that have reached England? There is a limited edition of 200 wrongly pressed LPs, try to get one!"

What do your lyrics tell of? So far I have only been able to work out the LP title, which

"Obscuritatem Advoco Amplexere Me" means "I Summon the Darkness to Embrace Me" and our lyrics are just something going on in our heads. What's hiding there no one will figure out!"

On the LP you mention a forthcoming Dark Age. What will this be like?
"You'll see!"

Have you ever played live? If not, would you like to do so in the future?
"No, we haven't. Maybe someday..."

Did Dan Swano help with the recording of the LP? Do you like Edge Of Sanity?
"Swano is a really interesting person to work with... our co-operation works out really nice. I prefer life without Edge Of Sanity."

I notice the drummer was uncredited on the LP. Who played the drums? Do you see the drums as an important part of Abruptum?
"Whoever played drums on the first LP really will remain a mystery (it was Dan Swano - Ed). The drums in Abruptum are very important."

Have any bands tried to copy the Abruptum sound?
"Some bands try to sound like us but I have to say it's really a waste of time and a waste of energy to do so. I hope the kids out there get my point."

I could not believe my eyes when I read that an ex-member of Abruptum ran off and joined the Christian church. Is this really true?!

"It's true. When he heard the result of the first demo, which he played bass on, he got badly scared and joined the first church he could lay eyes on and became a member. That's why I don't like the first demo."

Have you any new songs and are they in the same style as the debut LP?

"The new LP sounds very much the same as the first, but it's a progression. A prog-a frog...! Just some old Venom talk. The new LP will lift you into the world of your most evil dreams."

Is there not a similar Satanic/anti-Christian organisation in Sweden to the Norwegian Inner Circle?

"The Norwegian Black Metal Mafia is a kind of smaller part of the True Satanist Horde, which I once started back in 1990. Some of the members in Norway probably wanted to do something by themselves so they did and started the Norwegian way of doing things... burning churches and stuff."

How much blood was spilled during the recording of the debut LP? Do you torture yourselves during rehearsals too? How often does Abruptum rehearse?

"We do not rehearse... you can't rehearse evil! You can rehearse music but not evil. Abruptum is not music. I can only guess the amount of blood spilled on the recording and it was probably much 'cause I felt pretty weak after it. We do the torture stuff in the studio and nowhere else."

Could you describe what the studio was like during the recording?

"I don't remember much of the recording at all. What I remember is: some of those feelings, the darkness, the cold, blood, pain and such things. I don't know... try to mix those things with candlelight, chaos, more pain, aggression and such things while listening to the LP and you might come close to what it was like."

The Count has plans for a promo video. Will you do something similar?

"The Count? Oh yes, the one in Burzum I guess. Have you heard he's not on DSP anymore and that he might sign to Earache? I really wonder if this guy is worth mentioning in an Abruptum interview. He talks shit about us all, Abruptum, Enslaved and Emperor, and he's not a friend to anyone I know. Just forget about Burzum, you'll get enough listening when "De Mysteriorum Domus Sathanae" with Mayhem comes, that's a promise! Ahh... maybe a promo video, we'll see..."

OK, this is the end. Any last words or future plans?

"T-shirt out soon... New LP out in September, maybe a third next year, early next year. And let's not forget the LP on Obscure Plasma. I wish you luck with your mag and I hope I can come to Scotland one day. Darkness it'll be, it '93."



WHORES OF BABYLON

A weird bunch are the Bristol-based Whores Of Babylon, albeit pleasantly so. They play sensuous ambient electronic goth-surmitorother which kind've strikes a chord with me, strange as it may seem. A wonderful LP named "Metropolis" appeared on Candlelight in late 1994, shortly before the recording of which Ross contacted lead vocalist Shaun to delve into the mysterious complexities of our very existence. Or was it merely to partake in a brief Babylonian history lesson...?

"We formed in late 1992 (October 31st, to be precise) because we wanted to do something a bit different, so we worked on a demo which became "Eternal", released in April '93. The response was really good from 'zines and companies, which we were pleased about."

Have you signed to Candlelight yet? Tell us a little about the LP and whether or not you'll be "borrowing" an HR Giger picture for the cover again.

"Well, when we get the contract and the recording costs, then yes, we will be. The album should be coming out in Feb/March and no, the cover will not be a Giger picture. It is going to be by the painter Bruegel. The content of the album will be a bit mixed, with tracks varying from rock-orientated songs to some with dance beats and hip-hop break beats. Others will have 12 string sections and lots of guest musicians, etc., and of course lots of orchestration."

Do you have any plans to play live? What will your stage show be like?

"We will play live. We already have the musicians in live, but at the moment we are interested only in putting the stuff out."

Will you be recording the LP in your own studio? How long has State of the Art been going?

"Yes, we are going to record/produce our album in our studio. We've been running our studio for two and a half years."

Are there many other gothic bands in the UK you can recommend? Are there any bands that share some of your thoughts and/or concepts?

"Let's get one thing straight: We fucking hate gothic bands, although the Sisters Of Mercy aren't bad, but we don't really listen to all that stuff. Our influences are from classical music, Indian music, metal, dance, techno, hip-hop (especially the new stuff). We are only into gothic in the true sense of the word, but let's get back to the question. We don't really know a lot of bands who think like us, but Eterne and Dead Christ who have recorded here are quite cool in the ideas concerning dark music."

Could you give us the meaning of your name?

"The name is because I have a passion for ancient mythology, especially ancient Babylon, and the lyrics are along the same lines, but a lot of the songs are about my personal goings on."

In what direction do you see your music headed in the future?

"Well, I don't really know, but we've done lots of developing since "Eternal" and God knows what direction we are going to take next."

Last words?

"Cheers mate. Yours, the Whores..."

hybernoid

Those of you misfortunate enough to have read my first issue may recall that I was somewhat nonplussed when confronted with Hybernoid; I didn't know what to make of them and that worried me a little. Even now, twelve months and a whole lot of mind-opening later, their music is still beyond categorisation, but their debut album "The Last Day Begins" has grown on me considerably. Puzzled, perplexed and dying to delve into the motivations behind such an enigmatic band, I sent an interview down to my good friend Andy Bennett, bass player for the 'Noid.

So, Andy, is Hybernoid the album band any different from Hybernoid the demo and EP band?

"Hybernoid the album and EP band is surely different from Hybernoid the demo band, as we had a line-up change after the "Grief" demo. We made a conscious attempt to change the band after the "Grief" demo because we got fed up of trying to fit into a particular mould. We just decided to do our own thing, to break away from anything that could hold us down to one style or sound. Like I try to explain to most people, a band is a learning process. At first we might have sounded together, but it's only in the last 2 years that I've felt we have gelled together as a single unit. Competent musicians maybe?"

For some reason, whenever I listen to "The Last Day Begins" I get the same vivid image in my mind. This is of a machine crying. Would you like to discuss this and perhaps elaborate on some of the atmospheres and moods you set out to create with your music?

"We never set out to play any style; what comes across is the input of 6 different people, all with very different musical tastes. This is the sound we came up with; it's very Hybernoid and no one can say "Oh yeah, they sound like blah blah". Obviously we create moods and feelings, I like to be moved by music. Like that shiver you get down your back or the butterflies in the stomach thing... If that happens then the music is obviously moving you, and if we capture that then excellent. A machine crying is a nice description maybe of the subtle anger yet sadness in our songs."

Aha! There we have it: Subtlety, methinks, is a key element in the definition of Hybernoid's sound. Am I right?

"The music is sort of mid-tempo and it has an ambience about it, which makes it quite subtle. The two guitarists, Dave and the other Andy Bennett, are to blame for that. I think it's with mixing the influences of Carcass and The Chameleons; sort of light and dark not clashing, but meeting somewhere in the middle. We've been into this music for too long! It was a way of keeping in touch with the genre without having to thrash our heads off, which for us was interesting a good few years ago, but not so much nowadays. Don't get me wrong, I still love all that brutal stuff, but my boundaries are expanding all the time."

Mmm, that is fairly obvious in the progression the band has made since its conception. What triggered the change from the "Pure Grinding Doom" of Hybernoid '91 to the sophisticated mechanised melancholia of Hybernoid '95?

"Well, I think I've already answered this. We just learned to flow with each other. You

could have a band with 5 brilliant musicians that won't gel together; it takes a long time to be able to judge what somebody else is thinking or going to do. So, this answer to this is simply that we learned to play, ho ho!"

Paula Smith isn't exactly your garden variety female vocalist is she? Hell, her and Duncan's growls are virtually indistinguishable at times! Why did you decide to use female vocals, given that at the time or your conception it wasn't exactly uncommon to do so?

"Well, the first demo actually had another girl vocalist on it who was operatically trained (it didn't work that well), so we've had that element since day one. When we formed I think it was Confessor's "Uncontrolled" on the "Vile Vibes" compilation in 1990 that gave us the idea to do it with girlie vocals, even though we knew it was a chap. Paula (Brick) we got in after the first demo and she's a mean growler. Again, it was in keeping from the beginning days. I particularly enjoy her vocals as a contrast to Duncan's; they add that extra dimension."

There is an underlying tone of doom in your music. Is all this impending demise malarkey something you think about often? Do you really think it's too late for us?

"It's not really what we think about, all this world in ruin stuff. It's just that we take the time to observe what is going on around us without letting everything drift by unrecognised. I guess with "The Last Day..." CD we brought up observations of the impending demise of the planet at the hands of man; nothing more than stepping out of line for a second and thinking about it. I don't know if it's too late for the planet. The universe has been around for millions of

years, and I guess millions of years more after we've all fucked off."

In the song "Akeldama" there's a riff that sounds completely out of place in relation to the rest of the song... hell, album! How did it come about and is it there for any particular reason? (Sorry readers, this is a bit of an exclusive question.)

"The song "Akeldama" is really the only song which I have written start to finish. Our first guitarist (Pete), who's been long gone for 3 or 4 years, decided he would like to put that riff. Yeah, it's out of context because I don't think he was on the same wavelength as me, but it's in the same key and breaks up the song which was monotonous without it, so no reason in particular."

To me Hybernoid are a perfect example of the underground work ethic, having slogged away steadily for years with your two demos and three EPs before finally releasing a full-length album. Do you think this idea of working hard now and reaping the rewards later is gone forever now that there is so much money involved in the scene and so many small labels around?

"I think a band needs to make its groundwork or foundations before attempting to record anything seriously. This is why there is a fair amount of bad releases in the underground. Christ, I'm no one to tell anyone how to run a band, but as well as playing experience studio experience is also essential. Being in a studio, especially one that doesn't know a band's sound, can be a nightmare. I can name a few bands (mainly European) who have done such a thing and instead of a band it just sounds like 5 guys playing instruments! But, like I said, who am I to tell anyone how to run a band? Next question."



Heh heh, guess where I was told not to put this photograph...

To civilised society we metallers are morbid twats; pessimists and nihilists, but are we really? Moreover, are you?

"Well, I don't consider myself to think about death or doom more than anyone else. I am my own person and feel comfortable with what I am. I can again distance myself from people who walk the line and never put a foot off the straight and narrow. I think I have made something of my life so far, so I'm not too concerned about what anyone else thinks. I don't have an image or an act to live up to, so you get what you see really."

Which is, from what I can glean from our correspondence, a fairly jovial kinda guy. Surely, though, there is a darker, moodier, Hybernoid side to Andy Bennett too. How do you separate these two completely different aspects of your personality and do you find it difficult to write/play when you're not in the right frame of mind?

"When I play in the band I get lost in the music. We don't necessarily have a song, but can jam along for hours. Herb helps. Our songs come from preconceived ideas and jam sessions, therefore I don't really have a normal mode or 'Noid mode; one drifts into the other when we play. It's the same live, except you've got the adrenaline buzz. Obviously it's harder to get into the flow if you're not in the right mood, but if you enjoy what you do then that is not a problem."

Would you say that Hybernoid is completely unique or do you have a kindred spirit (not necessarily musically) somewhere? Esoteric perhaps...

"Esoteric? I like the band a lot, but I wouldn't say they have anything to do with us at all. I can't really think of anyone who does, actually. Through writing to Dorrian of Acrimony I think the bands are similar. Not musically at all, but I can identify with their rehearsals and getting lost in a groove, so maybe we are similar in that respect, but obviously not musically. Possibly Esoteric too, but I've never spoken to Greg about how they come up with songs so I don't know."

Can you see any limitations in your current style? Would you like to experiment with, say, technology on future records? You know, synths, etc.

"I can't see limitations in our style at all. We're managing to hybrid lots of styles and influences at the moment, so we have many avenues to explore if we want. As for technology, it's okay if we can reproduce it live which means getting another member in. Of course it's a possibility, but we like to make music we can represent live, so if we feel it necessary we could also explore that avenue."

Finish off by getting something you feel strongly about off your chest.

"I don't feel very strongly about anything really. I'm generally very laid back, but one thing I would like to say to new bands is fuck everything off that's been done before and try a different sound. Why be copyists? Use what's between your ears for something, for yourself and no one else! If people like it then great. Anyhow, I've babbled on long enough. Thanks for this interview Gregory and everyone take care!"

Hybernoid c/o Andy Bennett, 8 William Street, Broadclough, Bacup, Lancs OL13 8PG, England.



Morbid Angel are, I feel, one of the few Earache originals that have stayed true to their roots no matter how much flak they have taken for it in the past. Over the last decade they have written and recorded some of the most influential extreme metal since Slayer and it is thus a great privilege for me to be featuring them in these, the humble pages of The Crypt.

I interviewed the legendary Pete Sandoval in Glasgow whilst the band was on tour with Moonspell and Immortal and would like to thank him for his time, patience and co-operation. Unfortunately, due to my lack of preparation and foresight, I had to make up the large majority of the questions off the top of my head, so some of them may seem frivolous. Oh well, such is life... I hope you enjoy the interview anyway!

Are you pleased with the way "Domination" has turned out?

"Yes! I'm very pleased, man. Very happy with it..."

The new album sounds a bit different from your previous material, or at least more diverse...

"Yeah, I mean we have a new guitar player who has contributed to the song writing a lot. Also the sound... we used a new engineer and he gave us a really great sound, a different sound to "Covenant", on this new record. All these things together make it sound different. Also, we've got this last song, the last song on the album, and this has sort of a horror movie-type feel to it. Something different, y'know? Still very, very Morbid Angel though. We always will be!"

How has the response to the record been so far?

"Well, it's a brand new album still. In America we just did our first "Domination" tour and played to a lot of people who hadn't heard the album yet, so in some areas it was better than other areas. That's the way the underground has become in the States... It's like death metal has become something normal and in some areas there's not so much support for it anymore. There's too many bands and they mostly sound the same. They have ruined the reputation of other bands. That's why I think a lot of bands get sick of it all, y'know? They just say "fuck it" and move on. Still, we've done pretty good in the United States so far. We're gonna go back there and do it again after this tour, so it'll be better for us, as we have a good album out and stuff."

Seems like you guys have stayed true to death metal, though, unlike a lot of other bands who have been around for a similar length of time...

"Yeah, that's the way it is, man. Every album is Morbid Angel, y'know? We're never gonna change!"

Who or what influences you these days? Anyone else in the metal scene or are you above all that now?

"Musically, a lot of movie soundtracks. Horror movie soundtracks especially I listen to a lot. Dead Can Dance kinda motivates me and some Laibach still motivates me, as well as some Mozart and some other classical composers. Classical music in general motivates me and even some Spanish music. There are certain Spanish songs that motivate me to play what I play. It's not really other people in the same genre as I am, so it's just my life experiences really."

A few years back you signed to Giant Records in the US. Did you notice a radical change?

"Well, they're a bigger label and give us bigger support. We haven't changed our music, we've just kept writing killer songs for "Covenant" and "Domination"."

How many more albums will you be doing for Earache?

"Well, we always negotiate with Earache and other labels and whichever gives us the best deal we'll keep. So far Earache have given us a good deal in Europe, so we'll still use Earache and unless some other label comes with a better offer we'll stay with them."

When was the last time you were over here? 1990 or something, wasn't it?

"Yeah, that was during the Grindcrusher tour. It's been a long time... too long!"

I'll second that! What are your views on that tour in retrospect?

"I think it was super! It was great because of the fact that there was, like, four big bands on the bill. You know, Napalm Death, Carcass, us and Bolt Thrower, so that was a good bill and that helped."

This time round it should be quite different, though, as you're headlining with two more underground bands supporting you. Any thoughts?

"Yeah, but still... we haven't played here for so many years that I can imagine there are so many new people that may wanna see us."

One of the bands supporting you, Immortal, is a part of the Norwegian black metal scene. Are you aware of what happened over there in 1992 and 1993?

"Ah yes, there were a couple incidents, yeah, with killings and stuff... Morbid Angel isn't about that though. We just like to write good music, y'know?"

What do you think of their music?

"To be honest, this is the first time I'm gonna hear them, so I don't know. I've heard a lot about them; that they're meant to be good... fast, y'know? Yeah, it should be cool to check them out!"

Now that you've done so many tours do you find yourself slipping into a comfortable routine every time you go out on the road? (A bit of a Terrorizer mag style question there, eh readers?)

"Hmm, it's kinda the same routine pretty much because when you tour for the first time you're a bit unprepared. You feel quite nervous, kinda shaky and each time you see more people you get more nervous, but everything died for me already there. I mean, I know what I have to do and I just go on stage and do it. I'll do it in front of ten people, one hundred people, ten thousand people... It doesn't matter, but I find playing to a big crowd is better because you know you're getting to more people. I suppose it does make a difference to me then, but I'll still play the same whether it's to a big crowd or a small crowd. I'm not gonna say 'Oh, there's only, like, ten people, so I won't play brutal...'"

Where is your biggest area of support these days? Europe?

"Yeah, I'd say so. You know, Germany, Holland and even places we don't play so often like France or Italy. There's a big underground scene there. Also, Mexico has a big underground scene and South America too. We've never played down there except for in Brazil, but that was a long time ago. If we were to go back and play Venezuela, for instance, or Argentina, we'd get about ten thousand people at one gig! That's how big we are in those areas because the people there are so hungry for this kind of music. It's not like here in Europe where there's a gig every fuckin' year!"

Is there anywhere you'd really like to play still?

"I like playing everywhere as long as we can get a good sound and there's good equipment and stuff. We need to do Japan still. We've never been there before and we're quite big over there. I wanna go everywhere, especially South America! We're doing a gig in Mexico soon and it's always cool to go there. You get, like, two thousand people at every gig and everyone's really into it, y'know? It's, like, death metal... Morbid Angel... killer!"

Do you usually make time to have a chat with the fans, etc.?

"Yeah! I'm doing it right now, ha ha! Mmm, I'm the one who likes to hang around and check out the support bands, y'know? Everybody else, like Trey... he likes to hang out in the dressing room, play his guitar and just be by himself, y'know? Me, I'm the one who checks out the support bands to see what they sound like and meet the fans and stuff."

What about sight-seeing? For example, have you had a chance to experience Glasgow and all the beautiful people that inhabit it yet?

"Last night we went to some pubs, but there wasn't really much to see because everything was closed. I'd like to see the castles, man. I hear there's some good castles, y'know?"

I don't suppose there's any chance of Terrorizer reforming and touring, is there?

"A Terrorizer tour? Well, it depends... I don't think it's a bad idea, but we'd at least have to do another album as well."

Ocht, nothing fancy really... just a few gigs here and there (with the emphasis being on here)...

"Yeah, well there's a lot of songs so we could do, like, the whole album, right? Yeah, I'd really like to do it, but I'd have to check up on some of the finer points with my manager to say for sure. Still, I'd like to do another album as well."

Any idea what Oscar Garcia is up to these days or did you not really stay in touch with one another after the LP was recorded? I heard he spent some time in prison...

"Gee, I don't know... this guy I never stayed in touch with. It's like after the album he was gone and got married or something, I don't know... Everybody's got problems in their life and he's probably been through some problems, but I don't know anything, man. I don't even know if he's ready for anything."

What about David?

"Oh no. No, he wouldn't do it. It'd just be the original members I think. Me and Jesse, y'know?"

How do you see Morbid Angel's music progressing in the future? Do you have anything in particular you'd like to experiment with on the next album?

"Yeah, we all do. That's our motto! I think it's gonna be a bit more experimental. Our new guy, Eric, he's gonna have a lot more time to write 'cause he only had, like, two months and a half to write us four songs, so he was being rushed. Now we've got so much more time to try out a lot of different things, so I think the next album is going to be a lot more solid, more complete. I don't know what kind of surprises there'll be, but they will come through our process of writing."

Has Eric settled in yet? I forgot to ask.

"Yeah, he's settled in, man. He's part of the band now. He's so much better and has even started playing the songs better than we do because he's a good guitar player. He's got himself some projects going too. Like he's got this project going by the name of Rutan, I believe (that's his surname). It's very fuckin' heavy, man, but it's not death metal. His girlfriend does vocals, a bit like Dead Can Dance maybe, and he sings too. It's pretty good, so when you hear about it check it out. It has some good guitar playing!"

Future plans?

"We're gonna do a lot of touring. This year through 'til next year probably. Then when we're done touring we'll go back home and start working on the new album."

Right, that's about all. Thanks a lot for the interview, Pete! Is there anything you'd like to say to the Morbid fans reading this?

"You know, I'm glad to be back in Europe and back in these areas of England where we haven't been for a long time. Also, it's gonna be cool playing the songs from the new album. I'm really glad that there's fans still out there supporting us and I hope they'll support The Crypt, man, and that they're gonna buy it!"

Morphosis

Morphosis. A word that strikes fear into the hearts of men not man enough to worship the ancient gods of death metal. Two demos have been excreted so far, the second of which, "Malicious Malignation" is reviewed elsewhere.

I interviewed guitarist and main man Vinnie O' Brien on a mild July evening in Dublin town centre. He and I escaped from the crowded Metal pub where we had been drinking steadily for about an hour and plunked ourselves down on the steps of some swish hotel. A grinning Brian Taube (Deprived 'zine) looked on and offered the occasional witticism, most of which have been tactfully omitted...

Right, tell us about the new demo "Malicious Malignation". Are you happy with it?

"We recorded it in April. We had a few problems with the studio and we actually had the sleeves printed up before we recorded it because we wanted to get it out quickly. We spent twice as much money as we did on "Modus Operandi" and the sound's a hell of a lot better. There's no oscillation, no speaker rumbling. The problem with "Modus..." was that it was our tour de force on the recording and we wouldn't modify that. We weren't going to be told by the engineer to step back and take it easy for a bit. We just said "fuck off" and ended up driving everything too hard and overdoing it. The result isn't bad... I mean, it gets the point across that this is a band from Ireland who are really, really, fucking heavy. It's like Morphosis - BANG! We're pretty happy with it, but we worked really hard on the songs and you lose about half the guitar riffs because it was so poorly produced. With this one we did a couple of things differently. It has a much cleaner sound and you can actually hear that a lot of work went into it, so I'm really pleased. I mean, even bands with CDs and big budgets are rarely completely happy, and I don't think this one's perfect either, but it's good enough, y'know? People have been saying how they like it better than the last one and the response so far has been killer!"

So, did you take much notice of what people said about "Modus Operandi" then?

"Well, not really. Morphosis is our band and we play to please ourselves. We don't give a fuck what other people think! If someone says "I don't like your tape, you're shit" I don't mind, but if they say "You're shit, you're all shit musicians" then I mind. We're not shit, we know what we're doing. It's just someone's opinion and I don't give two fucks. If you don't like us then don't buy our tapes, it's as simple as that. We sold 600 copies of "Modus..." though, so obviously people like it and think it's good."

Do you think the all the line-up changes you've been through since the first demo "Modus Operandi" was recorded has affected your sound at all? Would you say that this line-up is the best you've had so far?

"Since "Modus..." there's only myself and the drummer left. The sound will be slightly different, but overall it's not really all that much different. It's still Morphosis. I'm responsible for practically 100% of the

material anyway, so... We've got people now who are prepared to work hard and not moan all the time, so I'm a lot happier with it. These guys just work a lot harder and I just get on better with them. There was one guy in the previous line-up I didn't get on with, I won't name him, and he was very difficult to work with and he was a lazy cunt. His replacement is a hell of a lot better..."

Brian (grinning): "I can name him..."

Go on then.

"No."

Pussy.

Vinnie: "Yeah, (mumbles) Pete Richardson (laughter). I mean, look at Paul's vocals... he's doing both vocal styles and he's just trying so much harder, y'know? I'm basically just really happy with this line-up, happier than I've ever been before. I mean, we've had 15-16 different people since the band started and this is definitely the best one we've had so far. I've said that before, though, ha ha ha!"

Now, at the risk of reopening some old wounds, you had some problems with a certain person from Northern Ireland a while back...

Brian: "Uh-oh..."

Vinnie: "Ooooooh, this is Alan Gill from Euthanasia distro who is a knob-end and whose mother sells sexual favours..."

Yeah, to him! No one else is buying, ha!

Vinnie: "Well I don't want 'em. I get my sex for free... I get paid! Basically what happened was that he was in touch with Hans from Shiver Records and they spoke briefly about him becoming some sort of a UK agent for Shiver. I don't think he realised that I was in touch with Hans myself at the time about a compilation CD he's doing shortly. So Alan wrote to me offering me a recording contract with Shiver Records. I thought this was strange because I'd been in touch with Hans for a few months and he'd never mentioned it. So I wrote to him about it and Hans said "Look, I'm really fuckin' sorry, but I can't offer you a deal. I don't know what the fuck Alan Gill is doing!" My main problem with Alan Gill is that he told everyone before he told us. People were writing and saying "Hey, when's the CD coming out?", and I'm like "What are you talking about?" I always used to think that Alan Gill was just a little bit incompetent, that he bit off more than he could chew and always tried to please people, but could never quite manage in the end. What he's done in the end is he's fucked a lot of people off and a lot of people are owed money. If he wasn't able to pull it off he shouldn't have done it. I don't think that overall he's a bad guy, he's just a fucking idiot who doesn't have a clue what he's doing and shouldn't be involved in the underground. I don't think he deliberately meant to fuck anybody up, he just shouldn't have been doing what he was doing."

Do you think you were ready for a CD back then anyway? What about now?

"Yeah, why not? We've got plenty of material and we've been around a long time. I'm sure, as the case is with any band, if a label were to come along and offer us a deal we'd work a hell of a lot harder and it would really come out good. Oh yeah, why not?"

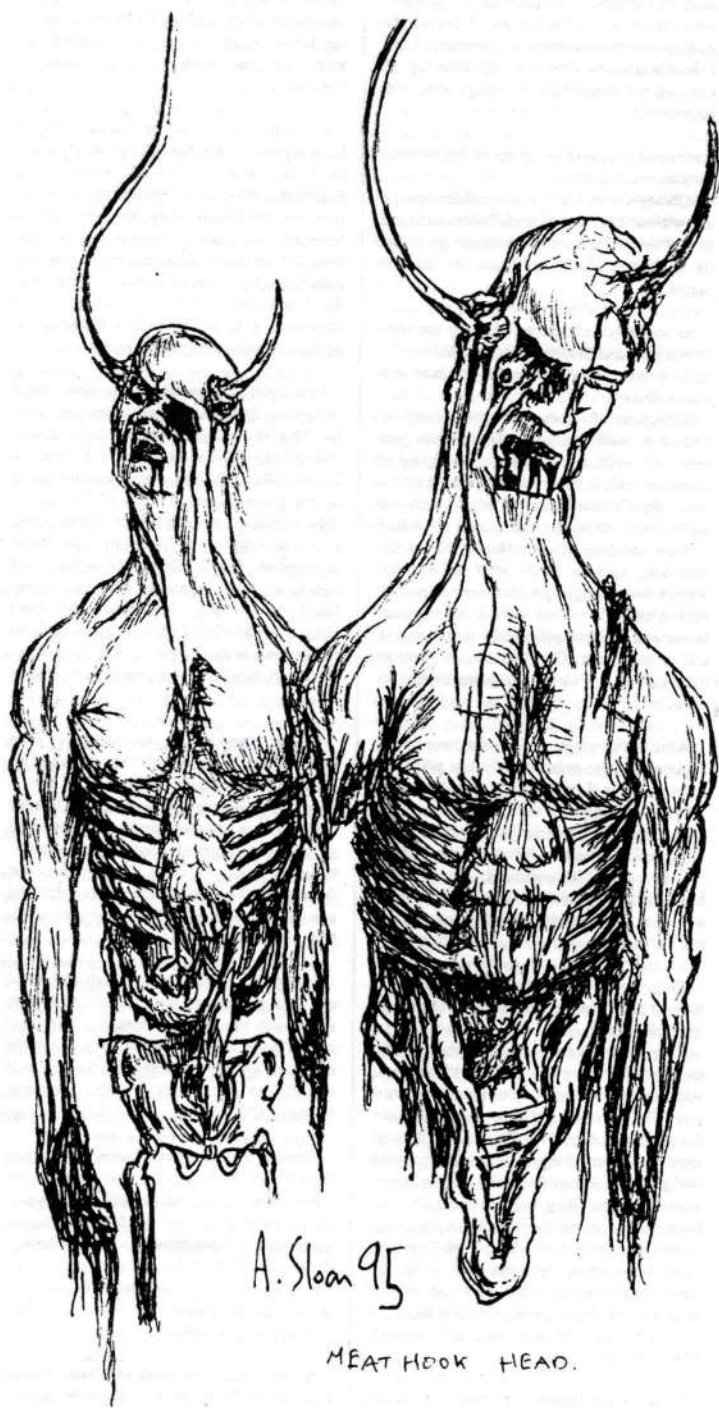
Well, it just seems to me that there are way too many "one tape wonders" about these days, if you know what I mean. Is there too much money involved in the underground these days?

"There are a lot more smaller labels than there used to be. Whether that's good or bad I don't know. I mean, in terms of glossy flyers and shit, I think it's just a case of bands wanting to promote themselves in the best

possible way. All they're saying is "Look, we're good, we're not a piece of shit. This is a good recording, we're a good band." I think all they're really trying to do is impress people and get attention."

So, do you reckon true death metal is on the rise again after what could be described as a period of purifying inactivity? Seems to me only the best and most dedicated bands are left in the scene now...

"I reckon all the trend-hoppers are gone now. They're all into black metal. Black metal has a very flash image and that will attract young, immature people very quickly. Like Alan the poof from Primordial (joke). Yeah, I think death metal has definitely been purified, the pricks are all gone. It's just a better scene now and people like Bill from Anatomia... it's always good to get encouragement from him. We toured with Desecration, who are guys with a similar attitude to us. I mean, we asked them whether they thought it was really bad that black metal has taken over and they were, like, "Nope!". And they're right, y'know? I mean, who gives a fuck?! Death metal's always going to be there. All these trendy little "I've got more T-shirts than you" pricks have gone onto black metal, which I think is



MEAT HOOK HEAD.

no harm done. Death metal will always be there, there'll always be a following for it, it won't go away. Like any trend, black metal will have its peak and then it'll come down. Death metal's just as popular as it's always been with real people, but the pricks are gone."

From what I've heard, there's an awful amount of rivalry among Irish bands. Have you ever been the butt of this?

"I don't think there's as much rivalry as there's meant to be in the UK..."

In England! Us Scots are above all that...

"In England, okay, in England, ha ha! I could name one or two bands here like Doomsgame who are a pathetic bunch of wankers! The only rivalry I see here is between black metal bands, because rivalry seems to be something that is a black metal thing. We've only ever had problems with Doomsgame and they are fucking little wankers!!! I've made it clear several times that if they've ever any problems with me I'll beat the four of them up alone! Apart from that... I mean, we get on very well with Alan from Primordial, he's a great guy. The guys from Thy Sinister Bloom are good mates... We've lots of mates in the scene here and the bands generally get on well. The bands here are very different, so nobody's worried about who's faster, who's blacker, etc. There's a lot of black metal bands about at the moment and I think that's why there's so much rivalry. If Doomsgame would fuck off and go away it'd be fantastic."

Are you purposefully going to be looking for a record deal now?

"Oh yeah, what we'll do is we'll send packs everywhere like we did with "Modus..." and if someone picks up on it someone picks up on it. If they don't we'll just do another demo..."

So you're not altogether taken by the idea of self-financed CDs then? To me that sort of thing is just a poor excuse for not having a record deal.

"I suppose if you've got the money to finance it, well and good, but how are you going to distribute it unless you get signed to someone with a decent distribution deal? I mean, there's an awful lot of small labels out there, but if we were to get a deal we'd like to have someone give us two grand for the recording, because that's what we'd need. You're not going to get that sort of money from a small label, no way! A lot of small labels just want to press your demo onto a CD or something. Oh yeah, it'd be great to have a deal, but we're not gonna change to get it."

What about gigging? Do you have much lined up for the near future? Any plans for some shows in Britain?

"We were supposed to be going over to do something with Desecration around Cardiff and play London the following day. There was this deathfest organised, but it never happened. I think we'll be going over to play with just Desecration now. I dunno, we'll see..."

Okay, say something intelligent and thought provoking to the readers of The Crypt to finish off with.

"Buy our demo (reviewed elsewhere - Ed), buy The Crypt, buy Anatomia, buy Deprived. Alan from Primordial gets pissed on two pints. He's pissed right now and he's down the pub on his face. Paul "Brickhead" Kearns from Fifth Dominion gets pissed on one and a half pints, so Primordial think they're really macho because they can drink more than Fifth Dominion, but they're all just creamers! Myself and Brian Taube here from Deprived drank Russ Smith under the table when he came over here and we're about to do the same to you, Greg, ha ha! Oh, and thanks a million for the interview, etc... LET'S GET FUCKING PISSED!"

Morphosis c/o Vinnie O' Brien, 13 Kew Park, Lucan, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

The Great White North

A Canadian Scene Report by Ali "The Metallian"

What follows is a report on the metal scene in Canada. I hope it gives everyone a taste of the Great White North's metallic talents and will act as an enticement for some of you to contact some of the below-mentioned. As such, let us wade through Canada's hopes...

Concentrating on Eastern Canada, Gorguts have signed to Hypnotic Records (Voivod, etc.) and will release an album soon. Following the band's mandatory departure from the Bird label, there has been talk of releasing the band's promo-demo on disc through Last World Records, but nothing has materialised yet. Having seen Luc Lemay and the 3 new members live on their tour with Oppressor I have detected a lessening in aggression and an increase in monotony.

Four tapes as Necrosis and one demo titled "Ungentle Exhumation" as Cryptopsy later, the Montreal quintet released their album "Blasphemy Made Flesh" on Germany's Invasion Records. The album, which sported different covers on CD and MC versions, duly became that label's best selling item, having recruited many fans to its hyper-brutal death/grind malaise. Cryptopsy seem to be signing to Wrong Again Records and, having heard newer songs live when the band opened for Morbid Angel, I promise album number two is no wimp-out... not even close! The band, incidentally, features a new bassist today.

Having shredded on Kataklysm's "The Death Gate..." demo and "The Mystical..." mini album, guitarist Stefan Cote had a couple of mis-starts before initiating Obscene Crisis, whose approach can best be described as "only if you consider Suffocation wimpy". Humour aside, Obscene Crisis was one demo and 10 unreleased tracks recorded and are well on their way. 9230 Lajeunesse #2, Montreal, Canada, H2M 1S2.

Agony also sport exciting death metal and one look at the band live indicates their ease and comfort in the live situation. The band can be heard either via their tapes or sample the band on the Underground Symphonies compilation CD. 1443 Pic IX, Montreal, Canada, HIV 2C2.

Necrotic Mutation have moved to Montreal from Rimouski, acquired a new singer, toned down a notch as regards brutality and are now finally ready to release the follow-up to the aggressive "Sepulchre of the Suffering" demo: Entitled "The Realm of Human Illusion", the CD is available through the band's correspondence address: PO Box 1492, Rimouski, Canada, 165L 8M3.

Ankhreg is another band who have partially relocated to Montreal. It is blackish metal of a Greekish variety and as such rather

uncommon. Simple and not pompous, the 3-piece have 2 demos with the second being available from PO Box 5088, Saint Laurent, Montreal, Canada, H41 4Z7. The band are slated to open for Malevolent Creation soon.

Other bands out of Montreal to watch out for are Hidden Pride (extreme as only Canadians can be), Tenebrae (this Canadian version needs to weed out the Emperor influences), Elements (reminds you of Atheist? It should!), Neuraxis, Amnimorex, etc., etc.

Six hours west lies Canada's biggest city Toronto. Known for the highest structure in the world, Maple Leaf Hockey and unserious musicians, the city's (or thereabouts) best these days must be Rotting. Formed out of the ashes or several other outfits, the band's second demo sounds as professional and strong as it looks. Rotting have played a multitude of shows here in Canada and are only getting better within their heavy confines. "Drown in Rotting Flesh" by mailing \$6 to Jeff White, 20114 Yonge Street, Holland Landing, Canada, L9N 1B1.

Formed by ex-Strappado guitarist Bob Sadzak, Inner Thought is industrialised death whose first album "Worldly Sepentation" has enjoyed relative acclaim. 1995 sees the band release "Perspectives", again via Witchunt Records. Although the album was recorded with a new singer, I.T. is already in possession of new staff! Regardless, Bob promises the band will forge ahead.

Occultists Cabal assured me a year ago that their album will be forthcoming shortly on Adipocere. Seeing that the release never materialised, let us move on to Interzone, the band of ex-Sacrifice guitarist/shouter Rob Urbinati. The result of Rob's collaboration with another former Sacrificer, Joe, and a drum machine is no less than 7 songs of thrash metal with an abrasive Industrial edge. 316 Coronation Drive, Scarborough, Canada, M1E 2J8.

Pomo seem to be a doubtful entity, so focus your attention on Summertime Daisies who soulfully glow under the summer sun... NOT! Death metal is the vibe out of the speakers when you play the band's demos and a good one at that! 366 Hollywood, London, Canada, N6G 1E5. It's \$6(US) for the latest tape.

London, Ontario's The Blood Of Christ have reportedly split into 2, with 60% of the line-up taking up black metal.

Edmonton at the foot of the Rockies harbours one of Canada's more enigmatic scenes, and Cremation are its biggest black metal export. Both "Pire Gah Haoth Raclir Oel laipor" and the newer ('94) "Hail the

Rise of Med Pe Gal" skip trendy keyboards and rise to the challenge. \$5 each to PO Box 983 MPO, Edmonton, Canada, TSJ 2L8.

Soultaker had me convinced with their pure death demo. Then came the more blackened demo and I was fully converted. Creative, enigmatic and vicious, the band were discussing several offers (a.o. with Lethal Records) last I heard about them. 8913-98 Avenue #182, Fort Saskatchewan, Canada, T8L 1G3.

Dark Minion certainly kick up a storm with the minimum of fuss and are one of the noisier bands out of this country. Dan assures me that the band are interested in the underground and eager to answer mail. Looking for aggression? Write to Dan at 50003 48th Street, NW Calgary, Canada, T3A 0S8.

And one last band from that area: Casket! Not to be confused with their German namesakes, these gore metallers feature more gore via their logo, cover and songs like "Butchery", "Grotesque", "Coffin for Air" than the entire Carcass back catalogue. Gotta love it! Oliver Postal Outlet, PO Box 35022, Edmonton, Canada, T5K 2R8.

Final word to mention things out of Western Canada is Blasphemy. Things have been shaky since the arrest of singer and his girlfriend in Holland due to drug smuggling allegations. Ace (Darren), though, asserts that he is hard at work preparing a third album which will be released through Osmose Productions again. In the meanwhile, do not write to the band as they do not feel obliged to respond. I am not certain if "Fallen Angel of Doom" will ever materialise on CD as promised.

Final mention is awarded Gorbage, who, having been active for at least 5 years, have three tapes which I am aware of. Three parts grind and one part death, these guys are certainly a rarity as far as the Canadian Maritimes are concerned. Please write to the band c/o Gerald Smith, 13 Earleton Avenue, Dartmouth, Canada, B2Y 2AG.

Thanks go out at this point to all the bands for their friendship and hard work as well as to anyone whose interest was peaked or simply read the report. Feel free to contact me should you require any information about the Canadian metal scene. Metal 'til Death!

Ali "The Metallian", 253 College Street, Toronto, Canada H5T 1R5

Editor's note: Ali writes for Pit mag and The Sepulchral voice, as well as hosting a metal radio show called Sonic Disaster. Bands get in touch! Oh, and he is also involved in a newsletter called The Underground Review...

SERENADE

The 28th Parallel

Embarrassingly, Serenade is only the second Scottish underground metal band to have released an album (the other being Korpse of course). Yet whilst the scene is somewhat lacking in volume, the large majority of releases from here are pretty damn good. Serenade's debut CD, released on the Motherwell-based Deviation Records, is no exception as it not only knocks the living shit of their somewhat mediocre 1994 cassette MLP, but also displays song writing ability and musicianship of international standards. No longer playing mid-paced doom/death, the Glaswegian quintet are producing some truly epic metal now and therefore register somewhat higher on the Cryptic Quality Scale. Somewhere between high and very high, actually.

Short-haired sticksman Graeme works here in Ayr, so one day he popped round after clocking off at the office and I interviewed him.

So, Graeme, how's about letting the readers know what you've been up to since the mini-LP was recorded?

"Well, the mini-LP was recorded in July last year and from November last year onwards we started writing our first full-length album, 'The 28th Parallel'. We finished writing that in September, went to the 40-track Palladium Studios in Edinburgh at the end of September and went back to mix it three weeks later in October.

Listening to 'The 28th Parallel', it isn't... erm, very deathly. Would you still call yourselves a doom/death band or is it more just progressive epic Metal now?

"Ummm... it's not something I've thought of really. Mark [McGowan, Deviation Records] calls us progressive doomrock, whatever that means. I don't really think of us as anything in particular, death, doom, epic or whatever. We just write it and it turns out like it does. I think it's still pretty heavy in bits and in other ways it's not very heavy at all."

Do you think categorisations really matter these days anyway? I mean, music's music, right?

"Well, I'll just listen to something I like, not just because it's a certain kind of metal. I don't not listen to something just because it's black metal, for example. I do listen to black metal sometimes, y'know? I think everyone'll interpret it - our music, I mean - their own way and they'll pigeon hole it their own way. You always find yourself saying *Oh, that sounds like so-and-so and that sounds like so-and-so...* Everyone's got their own opinion, y'know?"

Has much changed in terms of influences and what have you? You seem to have moved towards the prog-rock of, say, Dream Theater now...

"Yeah, well every one of us is seriously into Dream Theater and I think that probably

shows itself now a bit more than before, and Queensryche as well come out into it a bit more than before. I think there are quite a few Rush influences too and John still has his Cannibal Corpse influences, ha ha!"

Was the album written as a band this time round?

"Yeah, unlike the mini-LP. The mini-LP was something Fraser and Gerry wrote on their own. They'd come up with the riffs and then we'd all learn them in the studio. But this time the whole album was written in the studio with Fraser and Gerry still coming up with the riffs, but with all of us there, so we'd all have our own input into each bit. I think this time it was a bit more of a band effort than last time."

I take it, then, that you personally found it easier to play the songs, having been there since their conception...

"Yeah, we'd get the first riff of a song and we'd learn that all off by heart and then we'd decide to go this way or that way. Each song just sorta grew by one of us playing something different at the end of each part we jammed. Apart from one song which was already written - that was 'Ocean of Despair' - the album was written from the intro right through to the outro. We finished the last song more or less the week before we were meant to go into the studio. We had one after that, but scrapped it 'cos it was crap. Basically we just re-wrote it and learned it a week before it was meant to be recorded. Pretty frightening!"

Do you reckon it'll be quite hard to sell? The album, I mean.

"Oh, it'll sell thousands and thousands. I think there's something that probably most people who like metal will like on it, as there's so many styles on it. There's bound to be something on there that most metalheads will get into."

Mmm, and the progression you've made is huge. Your music sounds far 'busier' than it was on the mini-LP, for example. Was this just a natural thing or did you purposefully try to steer clear of what everyone else is doing?

"Ehhh... I wouldn't say we consciously set out to write something that wasn't as metal as before. Really it's just the way it sorta came together. I mean, there was a lot of stuff we'd written and were going to use then scrapped and swapped for different stuff. Obviously, over almost a whole year we progressed a bit more as we were going along. Some of the stuff was a bit more like the EP and at the end of the day we scrapped it and went for this more progressive nonsense."

Something that's rather unusual about 'The 28th...' is that it's a concept album based around the voyages of Christopher Columbus. What the hell possessed you to come up with such a theme?!

"The album, like you say, is called 'The 28th Parallel'. It's based on the voyages of Christopher Columbus and the discovery of the Americas. It's called 'The 28th Parallel' because that's the line of latitude he sailed along in order to get to Asia like he was hoping to do. The lyrics are basically about how he fulfils his dreams; getting the funding and persuading the royalty in Spain to give him the money to go; what he finds and basically just taking it from there..."

That's quite an unusual idea. Will people swallow it?

"Well, so far most people I've written to have been into it and thought that it's quite different. I reckon that's something it has got going for it, that it's different and that people will probably give it a go to see what it's like."

Did you get bored of writing about misery and despair, then, or did you just really want to do something completely different?

"Well, if we'd let John do all the lyrics we'd be a gore band, ha ha! It was actually wee John himself that came up with the idea. He had a sort of brain storm and we seized on it and just went for it. We thought that if we were going to do it we'd do it as true to history as possible and it is. The more we went on the more we realised it was turning out really well, so we just kept going with it."

People are going to have a pretty hard time grasping the idea of a Scottish band singing about Spanish history though, aren't they?

"Yeah, I suppose it is a bit strange. I haven't really thought about it that way. We'll sell it on the musical quality, though, hopefully."

Do you think you'll keep writing concept albums? Would you do a Celtic one?

"I reckon we probably would. I think the next one will definitely be a concept again, if we do a next one, but hopefully we will. We found it easier having something to aim for when we were writing it, because you write each song bearing in mind what the last one was about and what the music in the last one was like. It was like a jigsaw, trying to fit everything together. We couldn't just have, like, ten totally different songs or ten songs that are sorta the same like you get on some albums. We tried to write ten or eleven completely different songs that are still linked and I think that's pretty much what we've done."

Okay, so what were the inspirations for this Spanish idea then? Did you sit down and listen to a whole lot of Spanish folk music or what?

"Well, I guess the Mediterranean moments mostly came from Gerry because he plays a lot of Spanish classical guitar at university with his music course, so I think it's probably down to him. We got the Vangelis CD, the soundtrack of the movie 1492, which has

quite a lot of Spanish stuff on it, I suppose, and that probably rubbed off on us subconsciously somehow."

Did you find the album quite easy to record, given that it was your first real studio experience?

"It was actually a lot easier than I thought it'd be. We did the drums, basic rhythm guitar and bass all at the one time, and on some tracks we even did the two rhythm guitars at the same time as the bass and drums. Then we went back and did all the acoustic bits. There's six string and twelve string acoustic guitars on there, as well as four string and six string bass. After that we did all the vocals and the keyboards and the effects."

Was the producer relatively easy to work with?

"Well, the actual producer we had while we were recording was a bit of a fuckwit. To be blunt, he was a complete arse! Fortunately we got everything down on the master tapes okay, so when it came to the mixing we used the guy who actually owned the studio. He was just amazing because he knew how everything worked, whereas the first guy was always like 'Duh, where do I plug in what?', if you know what I mean."

Do you think that using a studio and producer that hadn't had any contact with doom or death metal helped to you achieve a more individual sound?

"Yeah, I reckon it might've, as the guy wouldn't have had any idea of how these sort of bands normally sound, so he'll have just made it sound as good as he thought possible. That's the way it's worked out and I'm really pleased with the sound."

So what are your intentions for the album? Would you like to use it and Deviation as a sort of stepping stone to a bigger label? A lot of people seem to be signing bands that already have records out these days...

"Well, Deviation have been brilliant for us so far, they've given us a lot of support; the recording costs as well, which we can't moan about 'cos they were pretty steep. I reckon if a bigger label was to come along, though, we'd probably jump at the opportunity. Who wouldn't?!"

Indeed. Future plans?

"Well, to get the CD out and promote it definitely. We'll probably start writing the next one now, as it took us almost a year to do the last one. As for gigs, getting the five of us together what with university and work is always tricky, but hopefully next year we'll take some time off and go and do some shows somewhere. That's about it really... Oh yeah, the CD is available from me for £8.50 or £17, so buy it!"

Serenade, 19 Castlehill Drive, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 5JZ, Scotland.



To tell you the truth, America is not exactly a favourite hunting ground of mine for underground talent these days. Sure, I enjoy the old family favourites like Repulsion, Impetigo, Macabre, Deceased, Immolation and Autopsy (who doesn't?), but apart from those most bands Uncle Sam currently has to offer bore me. Internal Bleeding don't, but then they aren't most bands...

They began humbly enough with two rather middle-of-the-road tapes (the extremely limited "One Dollar Demo" and its immensely popular follow-up "Invocation of Evil"), but it was their third recording, "Perpetual Degradation", that really caught my attention. This got them a cushy deal with Pavement Music, and it was several months before the release of their debut album "Voracious Contempt" that I interviewed guitarist and all-round nice guy Chris Pervelis.

Hi Chris... erm, what's up? Ever been to Scotland?

"Hey Gregory, what's up! Currently Internal Bleeding is writing some new material and we are trying to finalise contract negotiations with a label here in the USA. I hope it works out for us. I won't mention what label though, as I don't want to embarrass myself if (and it probably will, knowing our luck) it falls through."

"Well, believe it or not, I have been to Scotland! I went when I was about 16 years old with my family (10 years ago - I'm 26). I really liked it, especially going out with my sister and getting fucked up on Glenfiddich! I visited Loch Ness in the hope of seeing Nessie, but to no avail. I really liked the lowlands by the moors and stuff, all the castles, etc., real medieval. The people were extremely friendly too. I enjoyed viewing the Glasgow School of Art, designed by one of my favourite architects, Mackintosh."

A band of Internal Bleeding's calibre hardly requires an introduction, but would you do the honours just in case anyone reading this is unfamiliar with your sound, style, lyrics, image, message, etc.?

"Well, a band of our calibre? Ha! We're just an underground band, I am sure there are tons of people out there who don't know who we are! Anyway, Internal Bleeding is centred around one thing: SLAM! We write pit riffs and that's pretty much all we wanna do! Pure heaviness, no girls singing, no violins, no pitifully narcissistic displays of "musical talent". We play our music extremely well,

but we don't show off. Our songs are memorable and I'd say we are a lot more heavy than actually brutal. We don't follow the Cannibal Corpse sound of total speed all the time, we use many tempo changes along with loads of catchy riffs to create songs with personality while still remaining true to the heaviness and brutality a true death fan expects. And there's never any mindless grinding. As for image, we are trying to portray nothing really. We let the fans of the music decide what we are about. Personally, a lot of our lyrics deal with rejection, war, loneliness, karma, etc. Our message to most people is one of strength and purity of emotional thought."

These "slam" parts of yours... they wouldn't happen to be influenced by the late-great Exhorder would they? Their concepts of extreme groove are mirrored in the lame-assed plagiarism party that is today's

mainstream, i.e. Machine Head, Pantera, Sepultura, etc. What do you think of these bands and have they met with the same phenomenal success in the States as they have over here?

"Ah, good question! I love Exhorder! We all know that PANTERA STOLE THEIR SOUND! I do not like Pantera much, nor do I like Machine Head too much. Their sounds are fairly sterile and honestly lack heaviness. I couldn't slam to a Machine Head riff if I tried. We write what we think are real slam riffs, the kind that make you wanna hurt people. A bit too heavy for the commercial likes of Pantera and Machine Head. It's funny because four years ago we set out to be total slam and all of a sudden there's more and more bands trying to do it. I think it's pretty cool in a way."

"Well, Machine Head isn't as big in the US as, say, Pantera, and Sepultura's album did okay. Maybe if they stayed

true and didn't try to sound like Biohazard they would have found more success, but that style is getting pretty big here in the States. I hope their success continues, 'cause once people in the mainstream hear us they're gonna shit their pants! Then we are gonna help put death metal in its rightful place... On the throne, as the king of metal!"

Your 1993 demo "Invocation of Evil" was to be one of the most popular underground releases ever. How have the sales of and response to "Perpetual Degradation" differed?

"Well, "Perpetual Degradation" is still kinda new (ha ha ha - Ed), but it is already outselling "Invocation of Evil". Not necessarily in numbers, but in pace. For example, when "Invo" was first released we sold about 600 copies in three months. "Perpetual" has sold about 1000 copies in three months or so. "Invocation" is still

selling well though, the latest figures are around 5000 copies. "Perpetual" is at about 2000 so far and still going pretty well. I would like to say thanks to all the brothers and sisters who believe in our mission and cause, together we will destroy those who do not believe."

It is immediately apparent upon hearing "Perpetual Degradation" that you have progressed significantly from your second demo, which I dare say was a pretty standard affair. Do you think this would have been possible without the departure of your old vocalist Wallace?

"Well, thinking back on it Wallace really held us back musically because he never put anything into the musical aspect, just the vox. With Frank Rini (our new man) though, we have found writing much easier and the songs come out far more mature. He plays guitar a bit too, so sometimes he comes up with shit. Getting rid of Wallace really reduced the restrictions we had put on the band because of his one dimensional approach. We don't really talk to him anymore and from what I hear he has spread some serious bullshit about us. I find our compositions far more interesting now."

Join the club. "Perpetual" was recorded with your drummer Bill at the mike stand, as Frank hadn't been drafted at that point, so I presume the vocals on this are little to go by. How do the two styles compare and would you say that Frank has settled in properly yet?

"Frank and Bill are almost interchangeable, but Frank has more range and bigger lungs so he can hold shit out longer than anything! He really settled in well and learned our whole set in two weeks! He's written lyrics to three of our new songs already... I cannot shower this guy with praise enough! One day, hopefully, you'll see him in action. He's a fucking madman!"

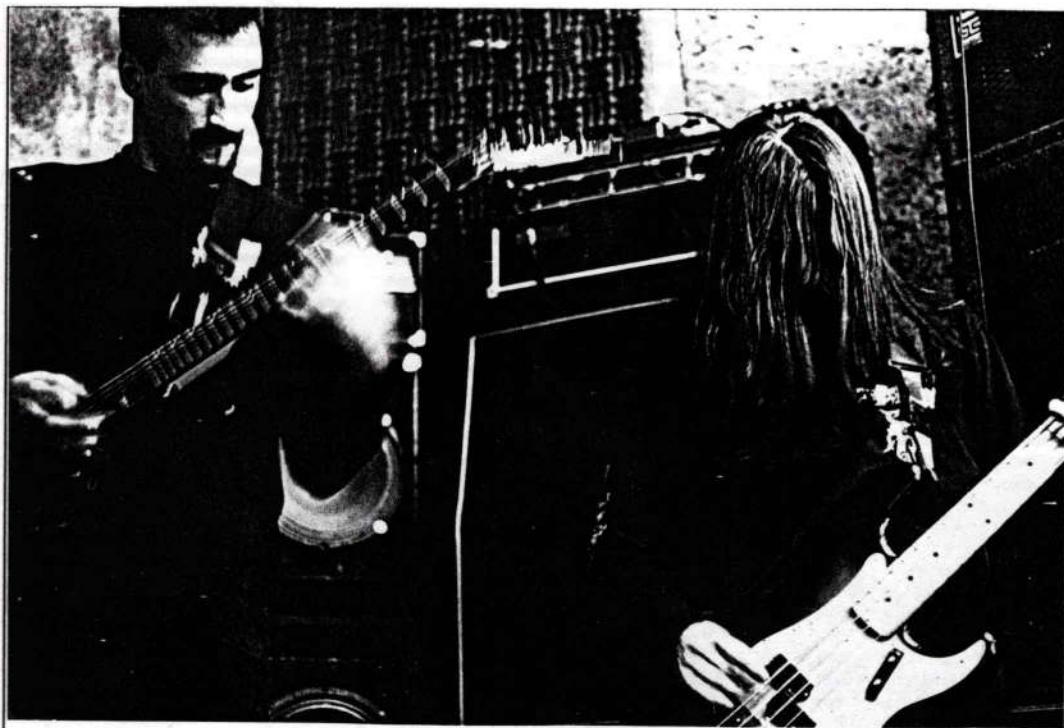
I imagine your shows are suitably violent and intense, then. Can we hear some more about them? How's about some dates over here in Europe or even the UK? It would be interesting to see how you come across live.

"I would kill to come to Europe... anywhere! Maybe one day it will come true. I can meet you and we can all get fucked and meet some girls! I love the fans of this music more than life itself and any way to reach them would be great."

"We have had some great shows, the Milwaukee Metalfest was incredible



Internal Bleeding from left to right: Bill Tolley, Brain Hobbie, Frank "Slaphead" Rini, Anthony Miola and our interviewee Chris Pervelis.



When they're not slammin' they're jammin'... Rock on, Chris and Brian!

(although Tom "Dickhead" Pascual would say otherwise). We played a few shows in Canada that blew up into full-scale riots! One of our best shows so far was in Cleveland, Ohio with Sodomitized, Dying Fetus (gods), Decrepit, Adnauseam and Horror Of Horrors. When we were playing people were picking up the floor monitors and smashing them on the stage, there were about 20 people on the stage slamming, etc. We encourage that at our shows as long as no one is seriously injured. We are the outlet for many of these people who have nothing to do except cling to the music they love so much. We are the same way, except the crowd is our outlet."

Are there many venues that support death metal in New York? Been to any interesting festivals lately?

"Well, there are some cool venues like the Roxy, the Continental, etc., all of which allow death metal. The last fest we had here was last August that I put together at the Roxy Music Hall. I got 15 of my favourite bands together and the turnout was close to 300 folks, so I'd say it was good! Recently we played with Life Of Agony and that was 100% killer. The people really got into us and we got a great response."

One of the main criticisms levelled at the NY/NJ scene is its apparent lack of diversity and originality, not to mention the huge headcount. Do you think there is any danger of an overkill?

"That's a good question. Well, most of the bands around here inject something into their sound that makes them stand apart from each other. I don't know any bands that exactly clone Suffocation or Cannibal Corpse 100%. I think that here there are enough bands to go around. I don't think it's overkill."

I beg to differ, mate. Oh well, at least

you're happy. I know a lot of people that, unlike you, are very critical of their domestic scene, myself included. Is it a case of the grass always being greener...?

"Another good point. I'm the kind of person who bitches about our scene because it's not healthy enough. I mean, I tend to like America and Canadian bands the best, and there's plenty of good ones, but I think the European, Asian and Canadian fans are far more fanatical and loyal. In Canada death metal is the number one pastime... 600 people at a local show - that's what I call a scene!"

"Total Fucking Slam"... "Barbaric Moshing Deathvomit"... Who comes up with all your little slogans? You seem to put a lot of effort and money into your flyers, etc., so does this mean that the visual side is an important aspect of the band?

"Well, I come up with all the slogans, ideas and concepts, then I farm the concept out to Russell. He understands the band. I have some new guys working on a tribal design for the band, it's gonna be sick. All the elements, the ideas, concepts, etc., all fit into harmony with what we are trying to create. We are trying to make the music exciting again."

What do you think about the UK scene? Do you know many bands from over here? Which are your favourites, over- and underground?

"Ah yes, Malediction is great, Korpse, Putrefy from Ireland (hey, I wrote to you, are you ever gonna write back?!), Esoteric, etc., etc. There's a lot of really cool bands out of Britain as well as cool 'zines and distributors like Aesthetic Death, etc. My favourite UK act would have to be a band called Crass. They were a around in the mid-eighties. Staunch Anarchist Noise Punk! I love them, they changed my life. As far as death metal

bands, I'd have to say Bolt Thrower or Esoteric. I do also like Putrefy, my pal Brain Higgins turned me onto them. Reprobate is pretty cool too."

Your name, I presume, is derived from the classic Obituary song. What do you think of the albums after "Slowly We Rot"? Boring as hell, if you ask me...

"Hmm, I like "Slowly We Rot", although "Cause of Death" was a lot better. I did like "The End Complete", but the new one doesn't turn me on that much. I was happy that they introduced some new ideas on the LP though, that was cool."

Tell us a bit about life in America. What does a typical week in the life of Chris Pervelis look like? I presume that, like me, you wish there were more hours in a day...

"Life in America is a lot different from the European lifestyle. I do a lot of international business for the company I work for and I can see the difference. In America the prime concern is accumulating wealth whereas in Europe people are content to be middle class and tend to enjoy life more than we Yanks do. When I call our Corby, UK office for business these people are so laid back it's agitating! Actually, I envy them. My typical week is as follows:

Monday: Go to work as an Art Director at Austin Sculpture; come home; do mail 'til 4am; go back to sleep.

Tuesday: Go to work; band practice from 7pm-11pm; go home; do mail; sleep.

Wednesday: See Monday.

Thursday: See Tuesday.

Friday: Go to work; come home; band practice from 7pm-11pm; go out with my pals.

Saturday: Sleep 'til 9am; do mail; go to work at None of the Above (a record store); come home; go out again.

Sunday: Repeat Saturday's schedule, except go home after practice. I certainly wish there were more hours in a day!"

Do you have much time to unwind with films, books, etc.? Are you familiar with the works of the great John Woo? Hard Boiled kills!

"I like John Woo. Hard Boiled is cool, although I think The Killer is a bit better. I like to read a lot. I read a lot of books about the US conflict in Vietnam and a lot of books by Dean Koontz. I like movies too, mostly war and horror films, although I dig sci-fi a lot. I don't really have time to enjoy these things too much, but I think that's what makes 'em special to me."

What about music?

"As far as underground music is concerned, I only like really heavy death metal or really heavy doom. I do listen to a lot of other stuff also, I like a lot of Jazz, tons of Black Sabbath, some classical and chamber choir music and some mainstream stuff like Primus. I like a lot of old punk/hardcore too. Shit like the Exploited, Sex Pistols, Conflict, Rudimentary Peni, Crass, MDC, Black Flag (gods), etc. Film scores are cool, I like the Dracula score. black metal I can do without except maybe Rotting Christ, Varathron or Moonburn. Other than that it bores me. There is some thrash I like, maybe Slayer, but I was never really into thrash. Some of the mid-eighties German stuff was great though."

In-fucking-deed! Now for an opportunity to humiliate your fellow band members... Share some of their more embarrassing quirks with The Crypt's entire readership.

"Okay, here are all our stupid quirks and habits:

Anthony: He's so fucking burnt! You show him a riff and he forgets it two seconds later. One time he got so fucked up that he played a whole song without his guitar plugged in. He learnt his lesson though and now he doesn't get fucked up until after we play!

Brian: Brian panics about everything! He stresses out and throws these crazy fits!

Bill: Bill sleeps too fucking much, he's always taking a nap.

Me: I have a nasty habit of licking the corner of my mouth and playing with the hairs of my goatee.

Frank: He asks me many stupid questions! (Hey, I know someone like that - this interview reads like something from Just 17... Aaaaaargh! - Ed)

With all these faults you'd think we couldn't function as a band, but we do and we do it really well together."

Okay-doke, that's all. Finish off by telling us how your new material is shaping up please.

"Firstly, thanks for what is possibly the best and most thorough interview ever! Thanks also for the support. I'd like to thank everyone who has helped us out in any way. Your generosity will not be forgotten!"

"Well, as for the new stuff, look out motherfucker 'cause it's slammier, heavier, a little more technical and way more thought out. We hope to be recording an LP within the next 4 months. If not, we'll do another demo. Support the scene! Later..."

Internal Bleeding, The Department of Inhuman Suffering, PO Box 1402, Lake Grove, NY 11755, USA.



Therion are one of few bands from the classic era that not only survived the demise of the Swedish death metal scene as we knew it then but have managed to progress with each subsequent release without becoming hopelessly dull and commercialised. Innovation, methinks, has been the key to their success, as they distanced themselves from their contemporaries even when Grave and Entombed where the leading Skogbergian lights and have remained strangely unmoved by fads and trends ever since. Granted, numerous line-up changes and label hops will no doubt have contributed to their continuing development, but there is something else in the Therion picture as well, and it is precisely this something that has fuelled my enthusiasm for them over the years.

Enough of the arselicking, however, and onto this interview with guitarist/vocalist and sole survivor of the original line-up Christopher Johnsson...

So, Lars has quit Entombed and become a permanent Therion member. Any hard feelings? Who is his replacement, do you know?

"Yeah, Lars quit Entombed and is now with us permanently, that's true. Lars wanted to play something more challenging as he didn't get any space for his talent in Entombed. But there are no hard feelings between him and Entombed now. I guess they felt that it was time to go different ways as well, especially since Lars didn't like the new Entombed material at all. According to Lars, the new Entombed songs sound more like Dinosaur Junior than Entombed. Jorgen from Grave is replacing him."

How was the Annihilator tour, and do you have any particularly fond memories of it? How does the new material come across live, and do you still play old favourites like "Future Consciousness"?

"That tour was cool! The crowds treated us unbelievably great and we can see on our sales figures that we gained a lot of new fans on that tour. I particularly remember when we played the cover from Running Wild ("Under Jolly Roger"). I usually didn't have to sing the chorus to it - the audience was singing it for me!"

"As for old songs, we played "The Return", "Pandemonic Outbreak" and "Symphony of the Dead" on that tour. When we're headlining we usually play "Morbidity Reality" too. I don't know how it will be in the future, but it's for sure that we'll always play "Symphony of the Dead" as that is our personal favourite of the old tracks."

Everyone's going on and on about some sorta "new Therion" all of a sudden, but I wouldn't really say you're musically a completely different band from the one that recorded "Of Darkness", would you? I mean, you've always had these, um... 'parts', haven't you?

"If you compare "of Darkness" with "Lepaca Kliffoth", it might be hard for some people to believe that it is the same band. But if you follow the progression from album to album, you can hear the successive change from complex death metal to a symphonic heavy metal influenced kind of metal."

Are you still searching for The True Therion or have you found your niche at last? Similarly, do you think you now have the marksmanship to hit the targets you're aiming for or is there anyway you'd like to expand your sound, e.g. with new members and/or instruments?

"Therion has always changed from album to album, and we're gonna keep on doing that in the future as well."

"We've never been a big seller, and I suppose we never will as we're always some steps ahead of the trends and refuse to adapt

Therion

ourselves to what's popular or not. It is also a fact that symphonic music in general (from the '70s to the '90s) never gets sales comparable to more commercial (or trendy) music. But on the other hand we never get out of date, so we can feel more safe than bands that are surfing a trend. Who listens to Exodus or Nuclear Assault today? Who's gonna listen to Bolt Thrower or Unleashed five years from now? I guess nobody, right? But I honestly believe that there will always be people listening to Celtic Frost, Voivod, Therion, Tiamat and other bands that are doing something musically unique and different to all the others. I'd rather do albums that will be remembered and that might get a cult value one day than do albums that sell better and disappear with time."

With your heavily orchestrated music and operatic female vocals people will no doubt be muttering the F-word to themselves. Would you cite Frost as a major influence? Who or what else are you influenced by - the early eighties perhaps?

"I used to have Celtic Frost as a major influence, but on "Lepaca Kliffoth" I was more influenced by symphonic hardrock/rock bands from the late '70s like Pavlov's Dog, Klaatu, Kansas, etc. and of course heavy metal from the '80s like Accept, Judas Priest,

Iron Maiden, Manowar, etc. But Therion's music is NOT a mixture between these styles. Therion is not a nostalgia of jewels from the past just because those diamonds inspire me. We are a band of the '90s and hopefully we will ride along with the time into a new aeon of 2000."

Is there a specific concept you base your songs around or are they all self-contained? What sort of literature do you glean inspiration from these days, if any? What's Therion's emotional range at the moment, and what do you say to the view that emotionless music = worthless music?

"I have no pattern that I follow. I just write the songs. Sometimes it turns out good and sometimes not. Usually good, as I'm not tied to a specific style or anything."

"The lyrics are from within, but some of the knowledge behind the concepts are from books like Liber Null, Liber Chaos, books by Kenneth Grant and internal literature from Dragon Rouge (a magical order in Sweden). I personally enjoy more emotional music and I also consider Therion a very emotional band, but I can also hear beauty in cold music like extreme techno, industrial and dark age music. But this is a rather stupid discussion, as everyone should listen to whatever they find interesting instead of arguing over

something that is 100% a matter of taste. You can't measure music or art. Objective taste does not exist; all artistry is based on subjectivity."

A lot of people (Nuclear Blast included) say that you're one of the most innovative bands on the label. Do you feel it's your job to be as creative and original as possible now or do you just play what you feel like? Would you, for example, throw out anything if it sounded "too death metal"?

"I write and play whatever I feel like. If I felt like playing pure death metal (or even noise/grindcore) I would do that, but the chances that I would feel like doing that are about one in a billion (or less). I will continue to explore the symphonic style until there is nothing more to discover in that direction. After that I haven't a clue what will happen. Possibly some kind of dark age metal, but who knows? I don't."

"Symphony Masses..." is without doubt your most experimental album to date. When you were writing material for it did you purposefully set out to break the mould of typical Swedish death metal? Were you at all worried that no one would understand your music or are you pretty oblivious to the pressures of popularity anyway?

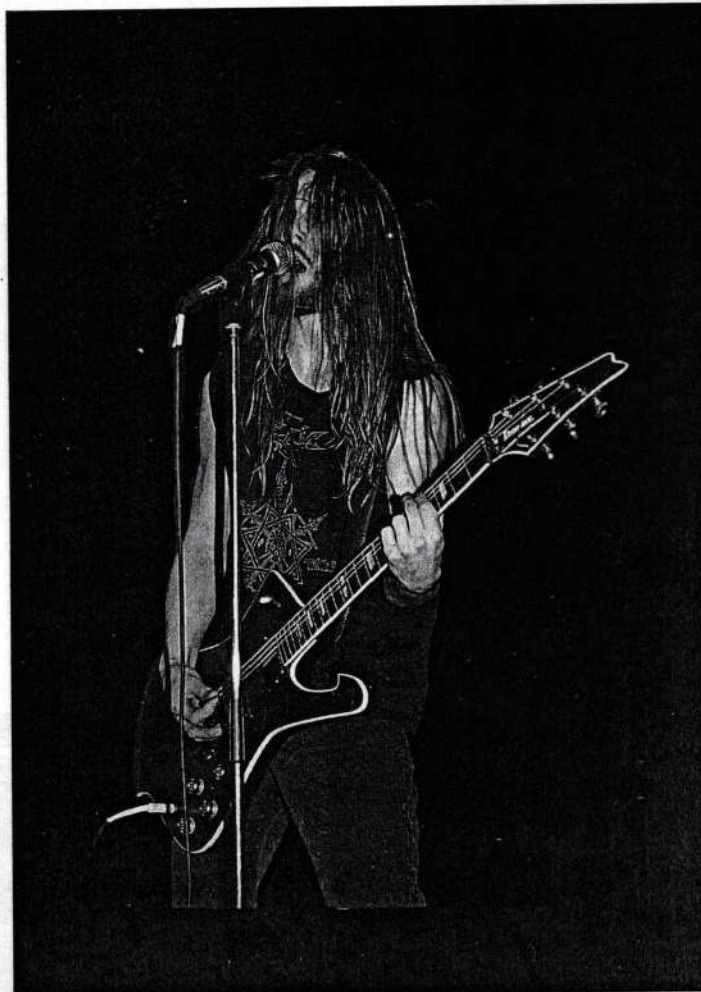
"After "Beyond Sanctiorium" was recorded all the members left. The second guitarist wanted to play pop and the drummer's girlfriend was about to deliver their second child (by the way, they've got three children now), so I had to recruit a totally new band."

"Before we used to be a totally democratic band. I still wrote 95% of the songs, but we all arranged the songs together and when my ideas were too freaked out I had to accept that the others didn't want to play them. But when the line-up changed totally I got into a situation where I could do whatever I felt like, as none of the new members had any objections to my most experimental ideas. So on "Symphony Masses..." I tried out all the weird ideas I'd always wanted but never had the possibility to do before."

"I didn't care if we sold any records or not, I just wanted to do an in my opinion good and interesting album. And, according to myself and the main part of my fans, I did."

Looking back over your past releases (debut mini-LP included), how would you rate each of them today? Am I right in thinking that "Beyond Sanctiorium" has been your least successful effort so far? It's certainly my least favourite of yours...

"The "Time Shall Tell" MLP (limited to 1000 copies) was a demo which was recorded in November 1989 and got released on a limited vinyl by a local record shop in June '90. Musically it is the same as "Of Darkness", but with a rough sound a more messily played. "Of Darkness" was really cool musically. It contained songs written 1987-89 (some riffs were stolen from my previous band Blitzkrieg (1987)). It was recorded in 1990 and released '91 and still was considered as original when it came out. I also think the sound was pretty cool. The only thing I don't like is the lyrics. They represent a period in my life when I let external influences make up my opinions and I also thought that those kind of lyrics would put us in a better position for good reviews. Everyone has their skeletons in the closet, and those lyrics are mine as it is the only time I have intentionally adapted myself in order to obtain better reviews and by that obtain better sales. This might sound very naive, but then you should remember that I was only 15-17 years old when I thought this way. "Beyond Sanctiorium" is in many fans' point of view our best album, believe it or not. But personally I agree with your opinion that it is the least good album we have made. I think the songs are excellent, but the sound is so awful that I can't stand listening to that album! But it will be remastered and



rereleased on a double CD (along with "Of Darkness" and a bunch of bonus tracks), so hopefully the sound will be at least a bit better than. What I like about the songs is that they are our first step towards becoming symphonic. It also contains the first experiments with Arabian/oriental music ("The Way"). The lyrics were okay for being written in 10 minutes each. As for record sales, this album is the least successful, but that's because it was never released in the States as the others were (this was due to the incompetence of the record label). But in Europe we've actually sold almost the same amount of records from the first three albums. "Symphony Masses: Ho Draken Ho Megas" was the beginning of a new period. Some people say that the band ceased to exist at this point and that Therion is now my solo band. Personally I'd like to state that Therion is a band, but with all the changing of members and the fact that no one interferes with my songwriting anymore, I must admit that it is pretty close to the limit of a solo band. What makes Therion a band is for example that we've had a stable drummer and that I have been very dependant on being surrounded by the musicians I have worked with so far. If it was a solo thing I could have let about anyone with the technical skill play on the albums, but instead I continued as a band with a sample of the best and most individual musicians available in this area. This album might be painted with my colour, but there were four of us holding the brush. The songs on this album we, as mentioned earlier, very experimental and this was the first album that turned out the way it originally was meant to. And by the success of this album I gained the future opportunity to release whatever I felt like on albums. So this in many ways was the most important album for me. "Lepaca Kliffoth" was the first album that we had a proper budget. The song "Beauty in Black" was written for "Ho Draken Ho Megas" two years earlier, but as we couldn't afford real opera singers I rather saved it for later, which happened to be "Lepaca Kliffoth". This album is in my ears the ultimately best album so far. It has a good sound, the arrangements are nearly perfect and the songs are very strong. The main difference in the songwriting on this album compared to the earlier ones is that some of the songs were written on a keyboard and not on a guitar. This made those songs more keyboard based and that reflected on the sound of the whole album. This album must be a classic, 'cos besides the ultra-excellent reviews everywhere in the metal scene we have caught a totally different audience. There are mainstream hardrock fans and even some more regular pop/rock freaks that have bought the album and liked it! Even my father thought it had a few tracks he liked (he always disliked our previous albums, which he considered as more or less noise)! It is really a challenge to do a better album."

You've been label-hopping for each album right from the start. Do you think this was the best way of doing things or would you rather

you'd been able to stay and grow with one record company? I guess being top priority at a large and successful indie is better than being bottom priority at a floundering major, right? Are you happy with your deal at Nuclear Blast or would you prefer to set your sights a little higher next time round?

"I think it would have been the best for us to sign to Nuclear Blast right from the beginning. But unfortunately we were too young and impatient, so we signed with the first bigger company that offered a deal (we were offered some smaller deals before that which we at least had the brains to avoid signing). I don't see anything else we could have done in the situations we had other than keep on changing labels, as we didn't get what we were searching for, but at least we're getting a bit better deals all the time. With

it? Seems to me this black metal thing has killed off a lot the enthusiasm, friendliness and community spirit, as it were..."

"I think personally I have lost my contact with the underground. I see it when we are on tour and I get some letters sometimes (which I answer), but I am not part of the underground in the sense that I practically don't know anything about what's going on. Naturally I am familiar with the fact that black metal is the latest hype, but speaking of the names of bands and today's music in a more individual sense, I am completely lost. I get to hear a new band once in a while when bands send me their demos. I really appreciate their efforts to send me free tapes and give them an honest opinion after listening to the tape. But those few tapes are just a fraction of all the upcoming bands, so

instead of being jealous at others' success. You could also be an internationally well known band even if you only had demo tapes out. Therion sold 1100 demos without even using any flyers during a period of two years (then we stopped selling it). Today you might be nobody even if you have a CD out! Around '91 death metal started to get really big (at least where I live) the underground spirit got more or less lost. And I recently heard from a band I know that they have sold hardly 200 copies of their last demo (and then they had professionally printed covers, flyers, etc.), so it also seems like not many people are interested in buying demos anymore. But... that's the way things are now and I am still very happy with the situation I am in today. I remember the fun I've had during the early days, but it is a fact that it is favourable

to Therion to get into a more commercial scene as we need a lot of money from a record company to be able to record such albums we want to. The money we got to record our first album wouldn't be enough for us to record one song for a compilation CD today."

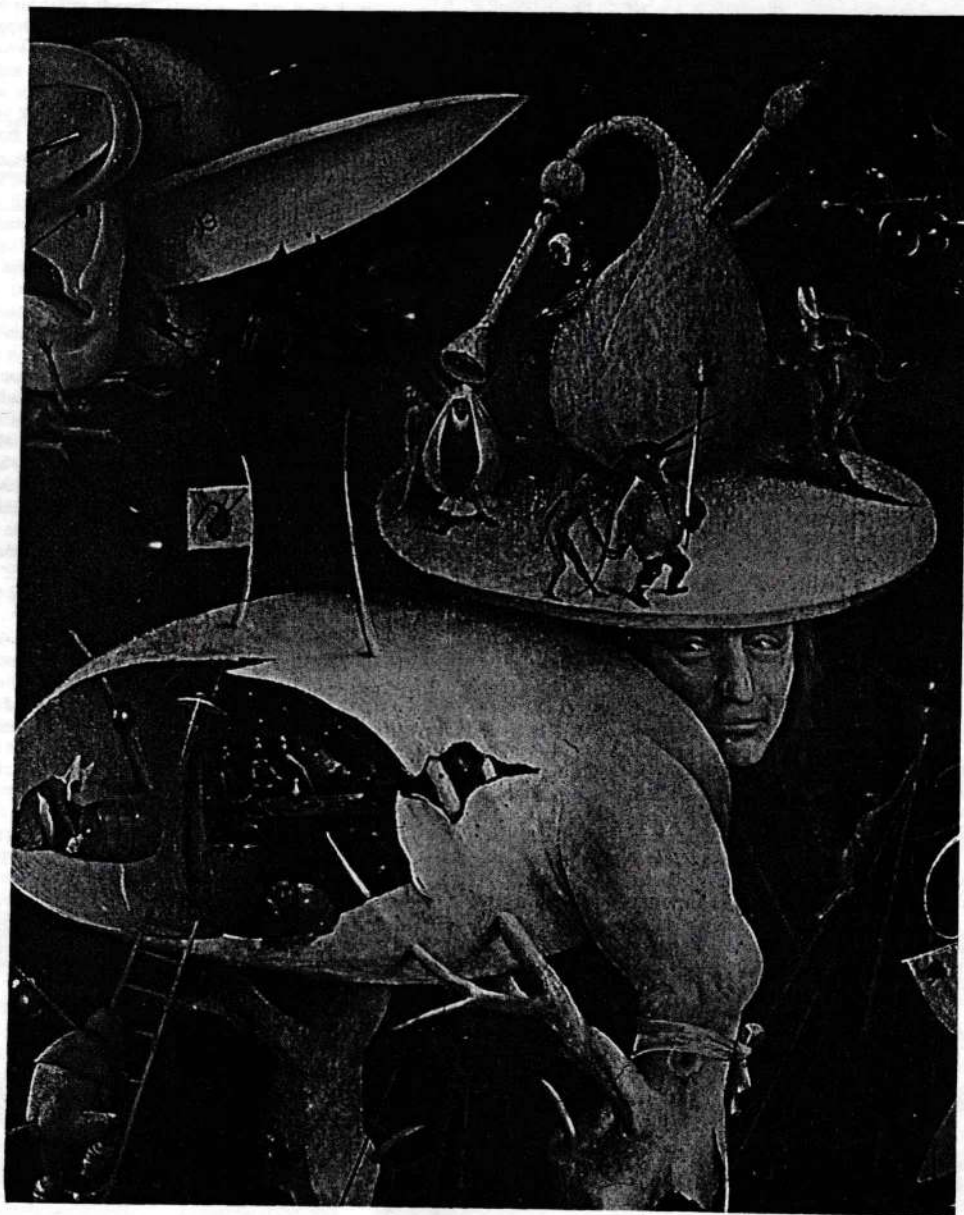
You grew up with a lot of bands that have met with varying degrees of success since the early days. Which of these do you still enjoy today, which do you think deserved recognition but failed to get any and which would you rather not be sharing the CD racks with?

"I grew up with bands like Accept, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Saxon, Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Manowar, Venom and a bit later I got into bands like Metallica, Mercyful Fate, Slayer, Anthrax, Metal Church, Megadeth, Voivod, Celtic Frost (RIP), Bathory, Piledriver (RIP) and a few more. I still listen to all of them once in a while, except Anthrax which I'm still tired of (maybe I'll start to like them again in 5-10 years from now). This is speaking of their old albums, most of the mentioned bands really suck today (especially Metal Church, Black Sabbath, Venom and Bathory - they should quit instead). I thin Piledriver deserved to get bigger, they were really great. But mostly I think both Celtic Frost and Voivod really deserved to get bigger. Especially Voivod, who are still doing bloody great albums! I proudly share the space in the CD racks with any of the above-mentioned bands and any other band I

liked while growing up."

I actually meant underground bands that you, personally, grew up with in the good ol' days, but never mind... Well, we have reached the end of our little talk. Thanks Christian! Is there anything you'd like to add?

"The new album will be out in June '96 and it will be even more melodic, symphonic and operatic. Some new is that Jonas Mellberg has quit Unanimous to join Therion. He will play on the upcoming album and has written two songs as well. There will also be loads of other surprises that I don't want to tell about in advance. But I can assure all real Therion fans that they will not be disappointed! If everything goes as it is supposed to we will deliver the ultimate Therion album!"



Megarock Records we had a contract that gave us twice as much royalty as bands usually get! With Nuclear Blast we have standard contract, but we are getting a much bigger advance, so we can do proper recordings and we get much better promotion and a bigger push. Yeah, it's better to be on a good independent label than a major label when speaking of bands in Therion's size. I guess we would sell a bit more on a major label, but we wouldn't have the same good contact with the label and it is also possible that we would lose some musical freedom."

Is the underground something you've grown out of or have you managed to stay involved with it over the years? How do you view the scene now and do you think it's changed much since you were first a part of

when I get letters and people ask if I've heard "that band", I've usually never even heard of the band before."

"As I was losing my contacts with the underground even before the black metal wave arrived, I can't comment on the influence it has had on the friendship and community spirit. But I must admit that the few impressions that I have got indicates that the attitude that seems to rule now is to be more "evil" than the other bands in the neighbourhood rather than creating good music and have a good time together. But the "real" underground spirit died in Sweden as early as around 1991. I remember when we made gigs back in '89. Then it could be a terrific concert even if it was held in a bloody hovel with only 20 people in the audience! And all the bands were helping each other



If, like me, you adore old thrash and are permanently on the lookout for bands who hark back to the early days of Frost, Slayer, Venom, Bathory, etc. you'll no doubt have come across Japan's Sigh on your travels. If you haven't, here's the perfect opportunity to become acquainted...

After two demos and a Wild Rags EP the band signed to DSP for an LP ("Scorn Defeat"), switched to Cacophonous in the summer of 1994 and have since released their second full length "Infidel Art".

This interview with bassist, vocalist, tinkler, spokesperson and female impersonator Mirai was conducted by Stewart just as the finishing touches were being put to this majestic slab of, and I quote, "early thrash influenced evil metal". Oh, and Ross contributed a few questions too.

Could we have a brief band history please?

"Sigh were formed in April of 1989 and released two demos, "Desolation" and "Tragedies" in 1990. Our "Requiem for Fools" EP was recorded in the February of 1992 and it brought us a deal with DSP. We recorded the debut album "Scorn Defeat" in March 1993 and now it's out although Euronymous couldn't see it. In 1994 we recorded the tracks for a Japanese comp. CD and a split 7" EP with Kawir on Cacophonous Records. Now we're recording the second album which I'll tell you about later on."

Who or what inspired you to form Sigh?

"The early thrash bands such as Venom, Whiplash, Deathrow, Slayer, etc. inspired us to form Sigh. In the beginning we were copying those bands."

Whereas now...? What are Sigh's philosophies; are you an anti-Christian band?

"No, I wouldn't call myself an anti-Christian. As you see, none of the Japanese are Christian, so what does it mean to be anti-Christian here in Japan? No one goes to church on Sundays or studies the bible at school, so nobody knows what Christianity is! As for myself, I'm heavily into Oriental occultism such as Dakini, Izuna, etc."

What were Sigh's original goals and what are they now?

"The first goal was to release an album, which was accomplished. We'd also like to play gigs outside of Japan. Also, we'd love to do soundtracks for horror movies. Other than those, it'd be great if somebody would kill themselves by listening to our music or reading our lyrics."

Now that would suit you just fine, wouldn't it? Sorry Mirai, if it is sensationalism you seek I'm afraid Judas Priest pipped you to the

post, like, ten years ago. Anyway, can you run us through "Scorn Defeat" song by song? What has the response to it been so far?

"Our CD contains seven tracks. "A Victory of Dakini" is a mid-paced opening track with a strange (read: pish - Ed) guitar solo part. "The Knell" was also on the EP, a fast and thrash influenced song. "At My Funeral" is a track with a lot of piano parts. "Gundali" is a synth/piano orientated track, not metal at all. "Ready for the Final War" is quite a long song in the early thrash vein. "Weakness Within" is the fastest track on the album; this was written in 1990 so it is also the oldest song. The last track is "Taste Defeat", which is slow and heavy."

"Judging by the letters I've had, the response has been rather positive, but I don't think that's a fair assessment, as no one would go to the trouble of writing to me just to tell me that they hate our album. Our music style is way different from the so-called black metal of today, so I'm sure many people won't take to us. I guess our songs are too slow for people who jumped on the black metal bandwagon from Grindcore. I'm really glad that all the early Thrash maniacs appreciated our stuff."

What is the band up to at the moment? Can you give us some details on your new album please?

"Now we're recording the second album entitled "Infidel Art". We gotta do some vocals and mix it in the beginning of May, so it's possibly complete when you read this (Ahem, yes. I'd say that's not entirely out of the question - Ed). We are recording six tracks for it, which basically sounds like "Scorn Defeat", but the synth parts are more symphonic and majestic. It'll in a way be an extreme release, so I'm not sure what people will think of it."

Sigh have been around for quite a while then, but you've not always played "early thrash inspired evil metal". What made you change from deathcore to what you are playing now?

"Well, personally I don't think our music changed so drastically (You wouldn't - Ed). All the new songs are progressed from "Desolation" and "Weakness Within", both of which were on demo 1. Of course I guess my way of singing changed a lot, but the basic idea of our songs has always been the same."

How does the crowd usually react at Sigh gigs and are you one of these people that get irritated when the audience isn't comprised of "true" individuals?

"They used to stand still and keep silent when death metal was trendy, but nowadays they bang their heads and yell because black metal is a trend now! How stupid they are; they just follow anything that is trendy (And how stupid you are, Mirai, for playing gigs in the first place if you cannot accept the fact that ordinary people might actually like your music too. By the way, I would like to bet that the large majority of your albums are bought by these undesirable trend followers you so despise - Ed). I don't care about the reaction about the reaction that much because I don't think so many people can share the feeling with us."

Would you agree that it is a mite too easy to get signed nowadays?

"Yes, I think so. Now every band with corpse paint can get a deal easily, so the scene is full of 'nothing special' albums and people will gradually lose interest in black metal. Like this thrash and death metal died in the past and now it's happening to black metal."

Recommend us some good Japanese bands.

"Obviously Abigail is a great band. Their 7" EP and split LP are brilliant! They play

fast, simple black metal in the early thrash vein. Sabbath have been around for more than ten years now. They've released 7 CDs, 5 7" EPs and a few cassettes. I think they deserve much more attention. Amduscias play Nordic black metal and in my opinion kinda lack originality, but I guess they are quite promising. Lately I've found a great new band named Drill, who play Venom-influenced black metal. They are great! There are a few other trendy idiots who claim to be black metal, but I'll never support assholes like them. What they do is destroying the scene!"

What do you think of Burzum, Mayhem, Impaled Nazarene and Acheron? (Aw, come on Stewart; you can do better than that - Ed)

"Burzum: I've only heard his first two albums, so I can't comment on his recent stuff. I think his debut album was really good, but I have nothing to share in what he's doing now. I don't know what happened between Euronymous and Grishnackh, so I don't blame him for what happened, but what I can't stand is blind Grishnackh followers. Who signed Burzum in the first place?!"

Mayhem: One of the greatest bands ever. How innovative their album is! I need say no more. Impaled Nazarene: I know they're talking shit about us, but I don't give a fuck because I don't even consider what they play music. Brainless noise for brainless kiddies. Acheron: I don't know very much about this band, but I get the impression that they sound like mainstream US death metal."

What are you listening to at the moment? Anything non-metal?

"The albums I listen to a lot lately are: the "Gates of Hell" soundtrack, "Gothic Impressions" by the Per Lynch project, Claudio Simonetti's "Evil Tracks", Sarcofago's "Envoy of Death", plus my all-time faves like Venom, Celtic Frost, Hixx, Sacrifice, Deathrow and so on."

Thanks a lot, Mirai. Is there anything you'd like to add?

"Thank you very much for the interview. If you're interested in us drop me a line. I'm not sure what merchandise will be available when you read this, so just write to me and ask. I really hate stupid form letters and tend never to write back to idiots who send me shit like that. Hear my last elegy, join my Dakini horde!"

Sigh c/o Mirai Kawashima, 1-2-8-401 Mejiro, Toshima-Ku, Tokyo, Japan.



Sigh '94: Ready for the Final War, Mirai (centre) looking particularly fetching in his mother's dressing gown.



BARBARIC GOD DENYING NORTHERN DARKNESS

I think that even the most ardent of black metal fans must get tired of this limp-wristed frost/forest/northern breeze bullshit every now and again - I know I do - and at times such as these there is nothing better than some good ol' bestiality. Denial Of God are pretty good at that, sounding a bit like old Mayhem, i.e. raw and uncompromisingly dark. They put out a couple of demos before signing an EP deal with Malicious Records from Germany, and as far as I know the Thus Defiled folks should be releasing a mini-CD by them soon. Meanwhile, check out this interview Ross did with Azter in early 1994...

First of all, please tell us what made you form the band back in mid '91. Have the bands that influenced you in the beginning remained the same to this day?

"We wanted to form a band for quite some time, but I didn't get a guitar until Xmas 1990 and then I started practising. The band was formed because we always felt we had talent enough to make it as a band and since then it has been something we need to keep us alive. We were heavily influenced/inspired by bands like Venom, Hellhammer, Celtic Frost, Bathory, Mayhem, Death SS, etc.. We owe a lot to these bands and we still listen to them of course! They will always rule in hell! I must say here that we have been into Venom since 1986! That is the truth! We want Denial Of God to be the darkest and most disgusting band."

Please tell us something about each member of Denial Of God. Do you only listen to black metal? Are you interested in Gothic or soundtracks? Why did Kulmar go to Brazil for a year and why have you had such problems replacing him? Is black metal not so popular in Denmark or something?

"No, we don't only listen to black metal, we listen to very much different stuff. We also listen to true death metal, real heavy metal like Manowar, Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath and I also listen to Kraftwerk! Yes, we are also very much into darkwave/gothic bands like the Sisters Of Mercy, Fields Of The Nephilim, Goethes Erben, Das Ich, Relatives Menschsein, Lacrimosa, Dead Can Dance, etc. Also horror soundtracks are great! I totally love Halloween and The Fog by John Carpenter and I have to get some more! Uskul is also listening to classical music. Kulmar went to Brazil as an exchange student (not that he studies much, he drinks a lot and probably fucks a lot of girls too!), that was planned before he joined us. After him we had Nomos, but we soon kicked him out because he was too bad and he was too lazy to rehearse. Now he has totally wimped out and I don't think he listens to black metal anymore! He found some new punk friends... he listens to shit like Pantera and punk now. But Kulmar is still the same person and it

will be great when he returns! Yes, it is very hard to find a replacement! What we need is a person who can play and is a truly dark and sick soul! He must be 200% dedicated to become a permanent member! Wimps and fakes fuck off!!! We now have a session bass player, but we have not rehearsed with him yet. Let us wait and see what will happen."

Do you think your vocal style is perhaps influenced by Burzum a little? What do you think of Euronymous being murdered?

"I agree with you that the vocals remind of Burzum, but they are still very different! Ustamallagham likes Grishnack's voice, but he is not influenced by him. He is inspired by godz like Dead (RIP) and Tom G. Warrior! Besides that we hate Grishnack for killing Euronymous! He killed one of the people who inspired us most! Euronymous is god! Grishnack deserves nothing but hate and pain!"

How long does it take you to write a song? What process do you go through composing?

"This is very different from song to song! Mostly it takes months, but sometimes (seldom) it takes 2-3 days! 'The Crying Usher' (the music was made during one weekend) and the lyrics for 'Follow Those who Died' (except the whispering voice, which was added later) was made in about 30-35 minutes. I usually have some riffs in my head/on paper, but I never write a complete song without having the lyrics, because the music has to fit the lyrical atmosphere. When Ustamallagham has written the complete lyrics for a song then I make the music for it, that's basically how it goes. Then we arrange the track 100% together with Uskul. Song writing for me is an extremely slow process, but then again I have never written a song that I later 100% hated. I am so lucky that I can almost always hear immediately if a riff is good or not."

Which labels have been interested in releasing your material? What will your next release be? Do you have any new songs written?

"Our next release will be a 7" EP for the German label Malicious Records. We will sign the contract in a few weeks... in blood. There might also be another 7" EP, but I am not sure about the label yet, so I shall not reveal anything. After that we plan a gruesomely dark mini-LP (which we are currently negotiating about too). Hopefully this one will appear on clear vinyl, at least in ltd edition! We have a new song called 'The Statues are Watching' which will be the A side of the 7" EP (on the B side there will be a cover track of a very special band). We also have a yet untitled keyboard-only track. Besides that I'm working on new riffs, very creepy stuff too!"

How is the Denial Of God live performance? Which band do you think has the best live show? What sort of people come to see Denial Of God? Will you ever play in Scotland or England? What are your touring plans at the moment?

"It is a black horror show, very intense! Besides our corpsepaint we have Ustamallagham throwing live maggots to the audience and have black candles on the stage! When we finally get to play some new shows it will be much more extreme. Besides the things I just mentioned we will have black robes and some things which I shall not reveal yet because it is not 100% certain yet. And besides, we want it to be a surprise - come and see it! But I promise there shall be dark stage decoration. I have not seen so many black metal shows, but I think one of the best bands is Immortal! I would have loved to see Mayhem when they were still in existence! What Dead did was beyond extreme, a loud hail to him! Also I would like to see Death SS because their make-up is so great, total horror! They are something special! Maybe I should travel to Italy to see them. The only two shows we have played were back in late 1992 and back then we were not very known, so the people who came to see us didn't know what they were about to experience, they were shocked! I must say that there were more black metal ghouls in Sweden than when we played in Denmark. That was probably because many people came to see Pagan Rites (godz!). Our show is notorious, so I believe more people will come next time. About touring plans... as soon as we have rehearsed a lot with our new session bass player we will try to put on a couple of shows outside Denmark. After that we should go to Poland for three gigs which we have been offered, but we have still to check out some financial things there because money is the problem when trying to arrange a show for a band from Western Europe in Eastern Europe. Maybe a friend in Finland can organise a show there too, but that's absolutely not sure yet! It's so frustrating that we do not have a rehearsal place because we would be able to play quite a few gigs! If we ever get the chance we will also come to Scotland and England too!"

Why was there more than a year between the release of the first demo and your new one? Is song writing a slow process for you? How often do you rehearse?

"That was because the recording was delayed several times by the lazy bastard in the studio, and besides that we do not have a rehearsal room permanently, so it took a long time to get the songs rehearsed properly. Yes, song writing is a slow process. At the moment we rehearse less than 10 times a year! That will change sometime soon, hopefully!!!"

Where was the artwork on your demo taken from? Will this artwork appear on your T-shirts at all? When will these be for sale and can you give us some more details on them please?

"The artwork on the cover of the 'Dawn of Aemizeaz' was found in some shitty book, but it could be found anywhere 'cause these middle-age pictures can be found in many books. It shows a Sabbath with demons, witches and Satan himself. The picture is bigger, but it was not possible for us to fit it in because there would not have been enough room for the logo and the titles, and it would have been reduced too much to fit. The T-shirts will be different, they will not have the demo cover as motif. We have not yet decided what the design will be, I can only say the shirts will be black. Unfortunately it might take some time to print them because I am the only one in the band with a little money, but I also have to buy an amplifier and a four-track recorder soon. I think those shirts would be a great financial help for us because many ghouls have asked for one! We will announce them when we have them!"

What books have you read? Are you interested in occult/Satanic literature? Which books can you recommend?

"To be honest, I have not read many books because I seldom have time for it, but Ustamallagham reads quite a lot. Unfortunately these books are very expensive (most of them come from foreign countries, you see), so it's impossible for us to buy a lot! Mostly the books about spirits are interesting because many books (for example La Vey's) are not based on actual Satanic belief! I must get hold of some of these really obscure books, but I probably won't find them in Denmark. I BURN to know what this 'De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas' book is, Euronymous told me so much obscure about that particular book! Anybody who has knowledge of this book (or even the book itself!) must contact me NOW!"

Would you ever make a promo video? What sort of concepts to you have for it and where would you like to film it? Do you have any live shows you have done on video? If so, would you sell copies?

"We actually have thought of doing a video, even if it would be more like something for ourselves. I had an idea for 'The Throne of Aemizeaz', but maybe something darker might appear to us. It surely would include some dark recordings in forests, crypts and cemeteries because that is what Denial Of God is all about! It would be excellent with a story with the dead rising from their graves to kill Christians and eat their children (he he), but it must be very gloomy, black and ORIGINAL! We would never do shit videos like every life metal

band has on MTV! Both our shows were recorded on video, but of the show in Sweden I only have the intro and two tracks (it seems like this was all that was recorded) and from the first gig I haven't got the video, but I should have it soon! If somebody is interested then write for a trade, because I search for any video by Mayhem (the true), Morbid (Sweden - with Dead) and Death SS!!!!

What has been your fave release so far this year and what release are you looking forward to most in the future?

"Well, I am writing this in 1994, but seeing as it's only January I must refer to the releases in 1993. Absurd's "Death from the Forest" demo is one of the demos I liked best despite the recording quality and musical skills. They are original and should be signed! Unfortunately some members will be in jail for quite some time for a murder (hail! hail!)! The advance tracks for Sigh's album killed me too! They are simply EXCELLENT! I look forward to that album and also the albums by Monumentum and Emperor should be dark as Hell! But the album I've been longing for is Mayhem's "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas"!!!! It will be ultimate!"

Recommend some good Danish bands, as I don't know of very many.

"The Danish scene sucks, but luckily there are a few good bands. Apollyon play great depressive black metal! Then there is also Dominus who play real death metal (not life metal) and Discomposure from where we have our session bassist. There is one more black metal band, but I have the suspicion they are false and trend followers! If they are they will die in pain together with Ceremony, Konkra, Illdisposed, Disaster Area, etc. Kill these bands! Hail Zykron B!!! At least black metal isn't a trend here in Denmark unlike almost everywhere else in the world!"

That is all I have to ask. Leave us with some future plans and merchandise info or something.

"We will sign a deal for a 7" EP on Malicious Records (Germany) and when we have a rehearsal room we will set up some new extreme shows. There will probably be another 7" EP later this year and a mini album, but we would like to concentrate on the 7" EP for now. Also countless cemeteries and churches will be destroyed... Chapels in the moonlight await!"

Denial Of God c/o Azter, Buen 2, DK-6340 Krusa, Denmark.



Mortiis

Hmm... difficult one. You see, on one hand I quite enjoy Mortii's second album "Anden Som Gjorde Oppror" but on the other I find his earlier works somewhat, err... crap. Well, not so much crap as just plain dull, and it was thus that I had enormous battles of conscience over including this interview. Ross conducted with ol' beaky himself a few months after he had completed his first (and therefore least interesting) recording "The Song of a Long Forgotten Ghost". Still, I had to print *something* to keep all you synth freaks happy, I guess... Well, no I didn't. But here's the fucking thing anyway!

Greetings Mortii's. Why did you leave Emperor and the black metal style behind to find freedom on your own?

"I left Emperor because I am hard to work with and I had other ideals than the rest of the band. I am still the black metal Mortii's that played in Emperor. I'm more black metal than you can imagine. There's no freedom in the Mortii's project. Only pain and chained souls living in misery..."

What is the sound of Mortii's supposed to represent? What bands, experiences, philosophies, etc. have inspired you? Do you think you're influenced by soundtracks?

"The demo reflects nothing but the complaining voice of a forgotten ghost. After that the new Mortii's concept is totally changed. It will take eternities to describe the meaning and philosophy of Mortii's, so I advise the editor to reprint or rewrite what is in the Mortii's info sheet (I'd love to, really I would, but unfortunately I wasn't provided with one - Ed). There one will find the answers to such questions. I have been slightly influenced by experiences, but no composers, bands or whatever. I enjoy film soundtracks like Der Todesking, Conan the Barbarian, Nosferatu 1922, etc. but they do not inspire me."

How have people responded to "The Song of a Long Forgotten Ghost"?

"Everybody seems to enjoy it, which is good because then they will worship my "Fodt til a Herske" songs which I will do this winter, because they'll crush the demo."

Have any labels shown interest and would you like to release an LP/CD?

"Things will emerge with both Mortii's and my other mindkiller projects in the future..."

Are you part of the Inner Circle? What is your opinion on the recent murder of Euronymous? Will the black metal movement in Norway collapse now?

"Yes, I am part of the black metal inner circle. The loss of Euronymous has its consequences. People are pulling out and so on because things seem to get outta hand. That only proves who's really true to their beliefs and remains and who's nothing but fakes and pulls out. I have plans for this world. I want everybody who is able to think, act and do things in a smart way to establish circles in their area. This time we'll be a world-wide organisation spreading terror and fear. I want such people to contact me for further encouragement and planning. I hate the Count for killing Euronymous. He killed him because he was jealous of his black metal position. Before this happened the Count spread a lot of lies about Euronymous. So many people now believe things about him that are not true. Grishnackh knew also that Euronymous had no really effective weapons at his house and therefore could not

kill him without having to experience any pain himself. This is very irritating considering Euronymous was the one and only person who carried on the black metal spirit and made the scene what it is today. If it hadn't been for Euronymous the Count would very probably still be playing guitar in Old Funeral today, as well as wearing fashion clothes like he did some 3 years ago."

Seeing as I haven't heard your music I don't know if you use vocals/lyrics, but if you do what are they about?

"Now that you have heard my music you can hear I use no lyrics. What I do is that I create music to accompany my lyrics. I advise everybody to send 2 IRCs to get a copy of my lyric/info booklet. That way people will understand what the concept of Mortii's is all about. It would take too long to tell here. As for vocals... in my forthcoming recording I will use vocals as an introduction to my concept. A very general introduction. In Norwegian, because that is my mother tongue and I express myself best that way. Other than that I will be using my voice as a choral accompaniment."

Do you think you will take on another member (or members) for Mortii's to add more instruments?

"No. Mortii's will always compose and perform his own music. Thus the moniker. But I have another solo project also called Havard Vond (now just Vond - Ed). I have a vague idea of maybe adding a session member for some tracks. For info on HV just order the Mortii's info/lyric book for 2 IRCs and the HV sheet will follow for free. As for adding other instruments, that is no problem, as I perform this on a synthesizer and the sounds are very realistic... even better."

Are you a Satanist? What are your views on life and death?

"I hate life as it represents light and happiness, and I cannot reason with these

things. This is no image or anything but simply the way I feel. I enjoy the thought of death as it is the enemy of life and the key to rid us of our enemies. It is also the key to my rightful kingdom. Satanism... I am no Satanist as my ego is far too great to worship anybody but my majestic self. I look upon humans as being helpless and weak. But I am powerful and I can do things (cool - Ed). True Satanism is believing and worshipping Satan as the fiery master of Hell. Your reward will be eternal torment."

Any plans for live shows?

"Right now that is hard. But when things get more happening, and very soon they will, I will start considering hiring a lot of session members and maybe, just maybe, Mortii's will do some shows. That'd be majestic, I can tell ya! Of course I wouldn't go on stage without a show like everybody else boringly does. I usually plan a lot before I do stuff, on the contrary to a lot of others..."

What you are listening to these days? Are you still into black metal?

"I still like black metal as I've done these past 7-8 years. But I like to listen to more atmospheric music since not many metal bands can manage that (unfortunately). I enjoy Klaus Schultze, Tangerine Dream, Synergy, Rick Wakeman, When, Thule, etc. Depressive, dark and deep music is what fascinates me most. But I also listen to old black metal and Norwegian black/Viking metal. Venom and Motorhead are still great. So are Black Sabbath and Eloy!"

What sort of a funeral did Euronymous have - a Christian one?

"As far as I know he was cremated and now surely rests in a golden urn. Definitely not a Christian one..."

The end is nearing... last words, merchandise, future plans, etc.?

"Yes, the end is ever-nearing... excellent line actually. As of now the new demo is available, but from December '93 people ought to request the music I will record then. In the meantime, I suggest people order the info/lyric booklet as that will enlighten them a lot than this rather uninformative interview did (that's not a very nice thing to say, Mortii's - Ed). It's 2 IRCs... I also plan to print some Mortii's T-shirts in the early new year. Gold on black... ask for these."

Mortiis c/o Anghel, A-ringen 52, 302 55 Halmstad, Sweden.



DISMEMBER

Dissection must be one of the best respected bands around today. How many people do you know that dislike them, for example? Point proven, methinks.

To me, they embody everything a death metal band should - speed, darkness and brutality. Not only that, but by going back far enough inspiration-wise they have succeeded in bridging the gap between death and black metal - no mean feat in these days of inter-genre rivalry and hatred...

Their 1993 debut "The Somberlain" has to have been one of the most acclaimed first efforts in years, despite No Fashion's failure to handle the sales and promotion of the thing. Fortunately, Nuclear Blast picked them up at the end of 1994 and late last year released album number two, "Storm of the Light's Bane". This had a lot to live up to, but disappointing it was not. In fact, it is a near masterpiece.

This interview was conducted a fortnight before going to print in Glasgow, on the British leg of the band's European tour with At the Gates. As soon as the last notes of "Kingdom Gone" had died out amidst a Biohazard-style stage invasion I made my way to the dressing rooms where I was confronted by a particularly fine example of The Missing Link (bouncer, for those of you unfamiliar with Scotland's unique breed of security personnel). Two minutes and an "Aye, yer a'right, pal" later I was sitting chatting and drinking beer with vocalist/guitarist Jon Nordtveidt, and it is the result of this conversation that you are about to read...

So, Jon, I wonder how you feel after your first concert in Scotland.

"Great! The sound on stage has to have been one of the worst yet, but the crowd was excellent. I'm really pleased because this is only our second full tour and already it has been very, very good."

Your UK support on this tour comes from Newcastle's Reign. Were you already familiar with their music beforehand?

"Actually, yes. I have read about them a lot and I also saw

them at the Marquee in London when they were supporting GOMORRAH. I cannot really remember much about them from that, as I was a little bit drunk at the time and just stood at the bar, drinking. I didn't really pay their music much attention. Also, what they play is not really my sort of thing, but they are a very good band and great guys, too. They got a shitty reaction tonight, though."

At first I thought you wouldn't be playing at all, as the roads were quite badly hit by the blizzards in England. Did the weather affect you at all on the way up here?

"No, the weather was okay. We all have a little bit of a cold at the moment, but that's from Sweden, not from here. I would say that the climate is pretty much the same as in Sweden at the moment. There were no

problems on the roads or anything."

Where do you think the music of Dissection works best - in the studio, live or at home on your stereo?

"Well, I think that it is a little bit different depending on the situation. In the studio we like to concentrate on getting the right feeling and atmosphere into our sound; we try to get the mood of the lyrics and the general concept of the band into the music. Live it is different, of course, and we worry less about playing everything exactly as it sounds on record. We just try to make it as intense and heavy as possible, not identical to the albums. Heavy fucking metal, you know?"

And do you listen to your own records at all?

"Of course! Naturally, you get a little bit tired of the songs because you rehearse them all the time, then you play them live and so on, so you get a little bored with hearing the music over and over again. We write and play the kind of music that we like ourselves, so naturally it is good to listen to it at home from time to time."

Are you very self-critical? I mean, can you listen to your music and not keep wishing you'd played the songs slightly differently?

"Yes, I suppose we are a little bit, but when we play live - like I said - we don't worry too much if we play part of a riff wrong or whatever. In the end it is only us that really notices, so it doesn't matter. The fans out there tonight certainly did not seem to care... they were great!"

Weren't you meant to be touring with Dismember or has that already happened? Sorry, but I am a little ill-informed about such things.

"Yeah, we did a small European tour with them, which was great. I think it was for about two weeks, and we played in Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria and so on. Germany especially was great, as they have a huge scene over there. Vienna, too, was excellent. We got on well with Dismember. They are great



guys, and we had a really great time. I think that we reached out to a whole lot of new people, as well as the fans that we already had. It was a great experience, no doubt about that! Also, we have a new drummer in the band, so it was a good opportunity for him to get into the band more."

You recorded "Storm of the Light's Bane" at the new Unisound, unless I'm very much mistaken...

"No, we recorded at the old and mixed at the new one, that was the thing. We recorded the new album there, at the old studio, and we planned to mix it there too, but when we were about to mix the album we found out that we didn't have enough time. So we asked Dan if we could mix it in the new studio, but then he already had booked a lot of other bands, so we had to wait for about four months before we could get there and mix the whole shit. Then Nuclear Blast weren't satisfied enough, and we weren't really satisfied at all either with the sound and so on, so we did it for the third time. Because of that the album was delayed for so long."

I certainly heard one of the rough mixes through tape trading quite some time ago, but I'm not sure exactly which one it was...

"Oh yeah? It's maybe the second, because that one was spread by the label for promotional use."

Well, I got it from a friend of Dan's...

"Oh yeah, then it could be almost anything."

The cover - it's a painting as opposed to some sort of evil photograph. Is this something you'd like to continue? Personally, I much prefer artwork to the typical images everyone seems to use these days...

"Yes, we want to continue that idea. Personally, I'm very fond of those kind of covers too, like the old metal covers. I don't really like these photo covers. I don't know... I just like it more with paintings, because then you can express a lot more ideas."

And no more King Diamond comparisons...

"Hopefully not, if Necrolord is doing a good job, ha ha! Last time we were supposed to have another cover, you know, for the first record. The cover was supposed to be an angel in a cage with a ripped Bible, and the angel was supposed to be crying blood. But he wasn't satisfied with that cover, so he started to do a new one. And I sent him a photo of a grand castle from Transilvania, the castle drawn, and I told him to base the cover around that one. Then he called me up and said that the cover is ready and that it has the same feeling as "Abigail", so I said "Yeah, that's great". We got the cover at the same time as they were going to print it, and then it was too late to change it. We just thought *What the heck, what can we do about that now?*, but I admit that it looks a little bit too much like "Abigail" ha ha!"

I think Necrolord did something similar to the original "Somerlain" idea for The Abyss' debut album, didn't he?

"Yeah, he developed the ideas that he had. I think that he maybe picked up the old cover that he made for Dissection and made it better."

The new stuff smacks of Mayhem, especially the drum-rolls in "Night's Blood". Was this inevitable, do you think?

"Well, I can quote Mayhem as one of many influences and personally I think that Mayhem is one of the best bands of all time. I compare Mayhem to Slayer. I compare Mayhem to Morbid Angel. They are up there together with the elite bands... They are down there. In hell. Reining, ha ha! But honestly, Mayhem has meant a lot to the scene as a whole and they are definitely a great influence on Dissection too. But we are not trying to copy our influences; they are just sources of inspiration. I think it is very important to have inspiring influences."



Do you get inspired by any new bands or is it just the old eighties ones?

"Well, I guess you are subconsciously influenced by everything that you listen to that you enjoy. I cannot state specific new bands that I am influenced by, but I guess the influences that you might have are subconscious. The bands that I know that I'm very influenced by and have been influenced by during the years that I've been playing the guitar are Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Slayer, Kreator, Morbid Angel, Mayhem, Destruction... everything like that, you know? All the old gods!"

Actually, a lot of bands are harking back to the eighties now, and especially in Sweden. There are a lot of classical heavy metal influences around, if you listen to In Flames for example. Do you think it's good that so many people are exploring their roots or do you think it would be better for them to create their own music?

"I think that the metal of the eighties is the best. The eighties was the best period for metal in general, I think. And now that death metal especially has developed into something far away from the original concept I think it's about time that people realised where the real roots of the music lie. The real roots of death metal are bands like Venom, Slayer, Metallica, Possessed, Celtic Frost, Kreator, Morbid Angel... those bands, you know? And I don't like it when death metal is mixed with the hardcore stuff or hip-hop or whatever. I'm totally disgusted by that mix - that's a crossover thing that I cannot stand!"

Literally as well, a lot of death metal has strayed a little too far from the norm, if you like at bands like Gorefest...

"Yes, that is a band that I hate especially. But I think that if you mix styles that fit together, like pure heavy metal with pure death metal and pure black metal, then it's okay. Not if you mix with other styles like punk or hardcore or hip-hop or whatever. You know what I mean, though. You can't mix synth music with punk, and the same goes for metal."

Hellhammer has reformed Mayhem, as you know. How do you feel about that? It's a typical question, but it has to be asked.

"Yep. I'm not the one to judge, but I kind of feel that Mayhem died with Euronymous and I think that it should be buried by now. That's my opinion, though."

The same goes for Venom, right? They also suspiciously reformed recently...

"Yeah, even though I really enjoyed their reunion show. I went to Holland to see their reunion show, and it was one of the best gigs I have seen in my whole life. But then again, it was old songs, you know? Songs from the two first albums and "Nightmare". I would be really sceptical if they should start to release new albums with that line-up. It cannot be the same now, and I think they're just trying to make money, but that doesn't change the fact that their reunion show was tremendous!"

You've recorded quite a few cover songs in your time, but personally I'm not sure I agree with all these so-called tribute albums. There's paying tribute and there's paying tribute, you know?

"Well, it's a big fashion to release tribute albums right now, and I kind of agree that it's maybe not that interesting. But we have always been into playing covers, and that's a thing that we really enjoy, especially live. When we got the opportunity to be on the Slayer tribute we said yes because Slayer's one of the biggest influences and biggest faves of all time for us."

It's a good album as well, don't you think? Better than "Metal Militia", at any rate.

"Yes, I think "Satanic Slaughter" is quite cool. We have always been playing tons of covers. Everything from Death, Possessed, Slayer, Morbid Angel, Bathory, Mayhem... We're going to do a Bathory cover for that tribute album, I think. We're going to do "Massacre" from "Under the Sign of the Black Mark", which is a very intense and brutal song."

You rerecorded "Son of Mourning" a while ago - '94, I think it was - for the Japanese Nuclear Blast compilation or something. Is that ever going to be released over here in Europe?

"Yes! It was for the Japanese version of "The Somerlain". They wanted a bonus track, and we were in the stride recording a demo with "Night's Blood" and "Retribution", so we decided to rerecord it. I think Nuclear Blast is going to release a limited edition shaped picture disc CD single in 3000 copies in April. That is going to include one song from the new album, a cover from Tormotor, "Elizabeth Bathory", which is on another compilation, the Wrong Again compilation, and also it will contain "Son of Mourning" perhaps... I am not sure myself, ha ha!"

You're being ripped off quite a lot in Sweden at the moment; you and At the Gates.

Do you think this is a good thing or is it just the Swedish syndrome again?

"I think that it's great when people are influenced by our music. We feel that we have succeeded in something when people enjoy it and find our music interesting. It's always the same, though: I don't like it when people rip off their influences, but as long as they use their influences as inspiring sources and try to develop it more then it's just great!"

What about Cardinal Sin? In my opinion they're particularly guilty of this, even though the reasons are fairly obvious and forgivable...

"Cardinal Sin? John's band... I have heard a recording with three tracks and a Death cover and I think it's good. It's a lot of stuff that was written by him during the last period that he was in the band; stuff that didn't really fit the music of Dissection. Well, I think it's good and I think that it will get better in the future."

Have you noticed the scene changing much since 'the good old days' when you were writing Mega Mag and playing in Rabbit's Carrot?

"Yes! Attitudes change all the time, with all the new trends and all that. I found the scene more interesting when I was new to it, because then you discovered so many new bands that you hadn't heard about before. New, unsigned bands, you know? But now... I don't have the same feeling for the scene nowadays as I used to have. Maybe that's because you have been in the scene for so long. You get less enthusiastic because you think all the bands sound the same and so on. I got into the scene through tape-trading. I was trading a lot of live tapes and then suddenly I was trading demos and discovering new bands. At that point in time I thought it was really great. It's not a bad scene now - there's a lot of good music - but it's just not the same feeling anymore."

Nuclear Blast - are they doing a good job for you? I mean, obviously they got you on this tour and so on, but otherwise...

"Yes, yes. They're doing a great job and compared to the old label, No Fashion, they're doing an excellent job! Because No Fashion was shit when we released our album then. I guess they're better now, but they didn't do any promotion at all when we released our first album. Things have really changed with the change of labels, and Nuclear Blast is really great. They're quite an established label and they're doing good

promotion, so everything is working out fine right now. But, you know, I don't like record labels at all. For being a record company they are good, ha ha!"

I suppose you've been pretty busy lately, but do you have any new material yet?

"No real songs, but we have lots of stuff put on tape, a lot of ideas, but we haven't really arranged any songs yet. That's mainly because we have a new drummer and we had to teach him all the old songs so that we were able to play live. Then we have been out touring with Dismember last year and after that we toured the EC and now we are here in England... sorry, Scotland. After this tour we are probably going to the States with At the Gates and Morbid Angel and after that we are going back to Europe with Satyricon and Gorgoroth..."

Fucking hell, man, that's quite some schedule... You're gonna die!

"Yes, I think so. And if we survive we'll start to concentrate on the songwriting process."

What are the new songs going to be like - are they slower like "Where Dead Angels Lie" or fast still? I presume you won't be changing your style too drastically over the next year or so.

"We aren't going to change the style or anything, but I guess in general the songs will be a little bit shorter. The songs on the new record are quite long, so I think we will try to keep them a little bit shorter and more intense. I cannot tell, really, but time will tell, and we will see how it works out."

How have people reacted to "Where Dead Angels Lie"? I thought it was very un-Dissection-like at first, but now I'd have to say that it is one of the album's highlights.

"Yes? It was the first really heavy song that we did; you know, heavy all the way. I think we have had a really good response to that song, and a lot of people enjoy it. That was the first song that we wrote for this album. I had lots of ideas, heavy ideas, and they just didn't fit played in the fast way or anything. We first wanted to make it an instrumental song, but... that didn't happen, ha ha!"

Do you have any project bands going at the moment? Is there anything you would like to try out but wouldn't really fit into the music of Dissection?

"Not really right now; I haven't had any thoughts about that, but I used to sing for a band called Ophthalma for a short period. I sang on their first album, and that is more like Black Sabbath mixed with Black Metal. I also did the vocals for a band called The Black on one album. That was in the same period as Ophthalma, and the members of Dissection were living in different places at that point in time so we didn't rehearse much. But since then I don't have any real projects, except for last summer when we started out a cover band called Outbreak. We played one gig and we played covers by Judas Priest, Venom, Motorhead, Celtic Frost, Sodom... stuff like that. We also made four own songs in the same way, but it's nothing serious. We didn't even want to spread anything. We didn't want to record any records; it was just a little funny thing that we did for amusing ourselves."

Do you think 1995 was a good year for metal in general?

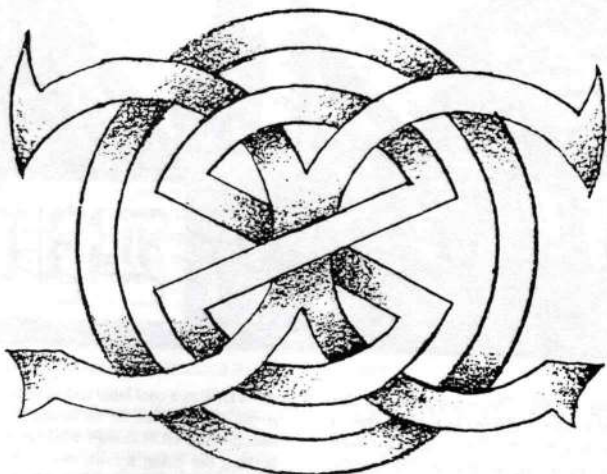
"It was, ummm... I don't know?! Ha ha ha... Maybe it was good, I don't know, because I didn't discover so much new stuff last year, but it was... I don't know, ha ha!"

Is there anything you would like to add?

"Yep. Thanks for the interview! And I want to say hello to all the metal fans in Scotland and England. We hope to be back soon; it was a great tour so far. Be sure, we will be back with a new album in one year, I guess."

Dissection c/o Jon Nodtveidt, PO Box 8723, 40275 Gothenburg, Sweden.

c o n f u s i o n



c o r p o r a t i o n

As the blackened clouds of industrialised euthanasia obscure the fading sun, high-intensity plasma bursts cast fiery shadows on the all-encompassing darkness. The doomed vermin that is humanity, or the remnants thereof, scurries for refuge beneath the ruins of its once-great cities, whilst almighty war machines cruise what is left of the crippled paradise formerly known as Earth. Miles above these urban cleansing operations hover the steel behemoths that are the Organisation's headquarters, oblivious to the fact that their controlled elimination of the inferior Homo Sapiens is on the brink of blowing up in their face. Literally. For beneath the ravaged streets of Glasgow plots of violent and merciless revenge are being hatched. A gathering of the strong in both will and body is secretly preparing itself for Armageddon. Its aim: to reverse the process of genetic supremacy; its weapon: death/grind; its name: Confusion Corporation.

Hello Quzzy. Seeing as Confusion Corporation are fairly new to the underground do you think we could begin with a brief account of your existence to date?

"Hi Greg. Well, we formed in late September 1993 after my old band Cenotaph split up. We've done 2 demos to date, 1994's "Confusion Begins" and the just released "Purify". We also did as many gigs as we could. It's pretty hard to get gigs up in this neck of the woods!"

Suffocating cybergrind: An accurate description of your present sound or a load of waffled bollocks? Who or what inspires you musically, ideologically and lyrically? Anything non-metal?

"A load of waffled bollocks mate, ha ha! No, but seriously... at the moment that describes our lyrical approach crossed with our musical stance. As for what inspires us, I don't know, to be honest. We're all quite paranoid about corporations and governments and stuff like that, in case you hadn't noticed, ha ha! I think we are influenced by books, music, whatever catches our eye or imagination."

Do you have big plans for the band, i.e. would you like to release an album at some point, or are you quite happy to write and record for yourselves?

"I would like to do an album and tour 'cos I love to play live. It's a pure energy rush! I also think we have something to offer. I mean, we play for ourselves first and foremost, but I would like to do something big."

Is originality an important aspect of Confusion Corporation? I ask this because

people are obviously going to be making comparisons to, say, Fear Factory or recent Brutal Truth...

"We try to be original, but if we have a riff that sounds close to something else but sounds cool we will use it. As long as it's good in our own opinion. People have already made comparisons to the likes of Fear Factory, Brutal Truth and Suffocation, which is cool 'cos we love those bands, but we think that's 'cos of the varied vocal styles. I mean, Godflesh used the singing vocal style long before Fear Factory, and SOB used the screaming Jap stuff years before Brutal Truth, so why aren't we compared to them? It's all a matter of what we think sounds good, and we mix our vocals to give us a different edge. As long as it sounds good, right?"

Right. How difficult have you found it to establish yourselves in the scene as a young Scottish band, given that you sound more American than anything else?

"It's pretty hard, but we are getting feedback and we are starting to suss out how things work. You know yourself how many bands are around since the rise of black metal, but I think we are as good - if not better - than some of the bands with record deals. I know that must sound big-headed, but we believe in our music and ourselves. As for us sounding American, that's just how the guitar sounds and that could change as we progress."

Is there a specific message you are trying to convey with your music, lyrics and image or is it just a general hatred for everything? People will definitely raise their spot-the-obvious-Fear-Factory-influence eyebrows if you continue with this cybertech thingummy for much longer. Are you worried?

"It doesn't really bother us, to be honest. We know it isn't really a new concept (I mean, just check out Voivod's "Dimension Hatross"), but hopefully we are approaching it from a slightly darker angle. I mean, songs like "Industrial Intellect" deal with the fact that corporations put profit before people or the environment. Plus we don't use keyboards like Fear Factory and if we did use samples/keyboards it would be in a more abrasive noise-type way."

You've had two recordings in circulation for quite a while now. What has the response to both been like so far and are you still happy with them? What (if anything) would you have done differently in retrospect?

"Well, we sold over 250 of the "Confusion Begins" tape, but the "Purify" tape is just out really, to be honest, so there hasn't been time to get a lot of response. We have had a lot of good response from 'zines, though. We were really chuffed with the sound on both demos, but in retrospect we would have spent more time on the guitar tone on the "Purify" demo. We didn't have enough time or cash, though. It still sounds fucking brutal and we're happy with that."

You've done a fair amount of gigs over the past few years. Do you think that these have played an important part in shaping the Confusion Corporation of today or do you view them merely as money/publicity generating exercises?

"They are important to us. They help us improve as a band and they help to build up a following. As for money, we usually break even with PA costs and van hire."

Many bands nowadays are using technology to widen their sound and appeal (there's Fear Factory again); are Confusion Corporation going to follow suit? How would you like to see the band developing over your next few releases?

"I don't know. I would like to use a sampler or keyboard to add a different dimension to the music. Maybe in a more abrasive way than the Fear Factory/Bladerunner stuff, who knows? I'd like to keep the wide range of vocal styles and stay brutal. We've been messing about with guitar tones lately, so who knows?"

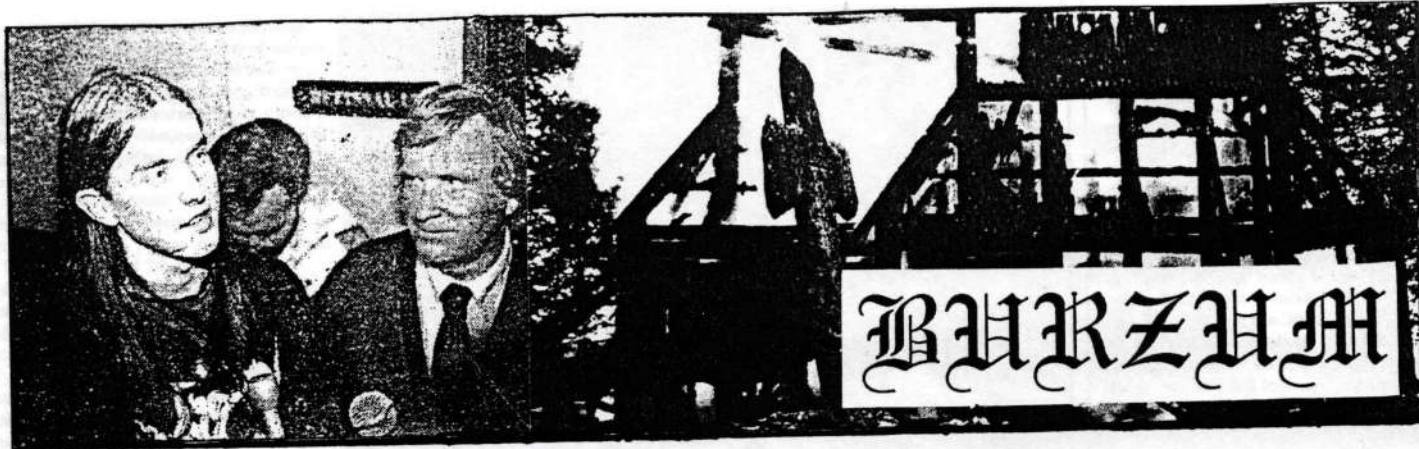
Thank you for your time, Quzzy. Leave us with some merchandise info and words of wisdom.

"Well, we have a song on the Shiver Records 4 CD Box set "Sometimes Death Is Better" parts 2, 3, 4 & 5. That has over 70 bands on it and costs about £16. Also, as I said, we have just released the 7 track demo "Purify" for £3. The first demo is still available for £2.50. Two songs from "Purify" are meant to be coming out on a 7" from Dissonant Records, but we'll see. Anyway, thanx Greg and thanx to anybody who has supported us. Stay confused!"

Confusion Corporation c/o Quzzy, 57 Bontine Avenue, Brucehill, Dumbarton G82 4EF, Scotland.



The 'Corp from left to right: Charlie, Dougie, Malcolm, Alan and our interviewee Quzzy.



It would be bullshit to say that The Crypt is in some way special or unique for featuring as Burzum interview, so I won't. What I will say, however, is that what follows is perhaps one of the most enlightening of its kind, having been conducted by Ross in early August 1993, a short while after the fifth and final Burzum opus "Filosofem" was recorded and a short while before the shit hit the proverbial fan. Since then, as we all know, much has happened in camp Grishnackh yet none of it musical, so this exchange is a relevant as any other. Slightly more intelligible too, as this was a pre-I am God/I've swallowed a dictionary Vilkenes. There are some terrific 'Vargisms' throughout, most of which I have refrained from highlighting, but some I found too hilarious to resist...

I've heard tons of rumours lately that you have signed to Earache. Is this true?!!

"I have not signed to Earache, but there is a chance I will. I have talked with the guys of Earache and they are as far as I know currently working on a deal. If I sign or not is left to know. I am having talks with labels like Earache because I am tired of being a band nobody can buy because of lack of distribution. I have no interest in being an underground band and seek good promotion and distribution. DSP is a label with debt bigger than ten income for DSP! He (DSP) has done absolutely nothing to promote the "Aske" mini-album and will probably never do. DSP is the most lazy label I have ever known and I have no interest in staying at a communist label with no money at all. DSP owes me some 4000 GBP because I had to loan him money to pay back the expenses for the debut album in early '92. He didn't pay back a penny and wasted all the income on silly things. I was a fool ever to trust a red one! Now he is ripping me off by not paying me what he owes me from the record sales. DSP is a falling angel, it will fade away and fail to exist because of bad organisation and laziness. I wish him bad luck..."

Sounds as if there are some bitter feelings between yourself and Euronymous...

"Yes of course there is bitter feelings between me and Euronymous! I learned many things while and after I was in prison. While I was interrogated Euronymous did interviews in the newspapers of Norway where he excused himself on the behalf of the scene, which was bullshit. The scene would never apologise for anything! He claimed the whole thing was childish and stupid, he fucking apologised to everybody that might have been provoked or in any way moved by the things happening in

Norway in '92. The worst thing is that Euronymous has fucking never ever done a single thing himself or even been involved in the things he apologised for on the behalf of the scene. He told Kerrang that he was "the economic fundament" and excused himself for not having done anything himself with that! Well the truth is that he hadn't ever given a penny to anybody in the murders and church burnings! When I got out of prison and found out all this he claimed that he said it all just to calm down his family and that he was "evil" after all. If he is so goddamned evil why the hell does he care what his family say? He also said in Kerrang that he had "no feelings left". Hey, why do you care about your family if you have no feelings left? Besides, hate is a feeling, music is also a feeling and just about everything else too! He is just a wimp... a coward and a stupid wimp! People talk

about DSP as a cool label and so on... What is the truth is that he harvested a lot of honour from OUR doings while deserving nothing but being thrown out of Norway after being shot dead! Now Mayhem is falling down and down... Only Emperor, Darkthrone, Burzum and Slayer Mag is real!"

I take it you no longer play in Mayhem, then...

"I view Mayhem as a dead band, there was no point in continuing playing when the vocalist shot himself. Dead was the only thing that made Mayhem something special and now when he is dead Mayhem is nothing. The new vocalist sounds like a fool compared to Dead and most other musicians in Norway. He is not even a Norwegian, which is ridiculous (neither was Dead, he was Swedish - Ed). Norway for Norwegians! I left Mayhem unofficially

in the end of '92 but officially in April '93."

I heard you had declared war on the Norwegian black metal scene. Is this true?

"What? No! I have more or less declared myself as an enemy to fakes who honour from things they have not done, but most of the scene is true people. When I say true I mean people who do not claim otherwise than what is true! Like Mayhem is not true when claiming to have no feelings left, Euronymous is a true wimp! Well there is no war, most of the bands and people in the scene understand that there is clowns trying to be evil, while in truth being just clowns!! Only the fools and the slow-witted have not understood this yet! They will, believe me! I dislike most of the bands in the scene, but I do not view them as my enemies just because of that. Enslaved is ripping Burzum off a bit too much for my taste, so

I don't like them too much, but still they're my allies against the clowns in the scene! There is no real problem here, only about 5% of the scene is fakes worthy of a bullet in their heads, so things will work out when we put the clowns back where we belong."

When will the next Burzum release be out and on which label will it appear?

"I did a full-length album in April that was supposed to be released by DSP in mid '92. Of course DSP was lying again and have now wasted the opportunity to even release a sticker of Burzum! The LP/CD will be released in September on Cymophane Productions, that's my own label, and even by doing it by myself I get better distribution than DSP! Apart from that long-awaited piece there will be a new album just a few months after the September release (titled "Det Som Engang Var" by the way). The fourth album is titled "Hvis Lyset Tar Oss" and will be released on... well, I don't know yet. Earache, Candlelight or Cymophane I think. I don't know, time shall tell!"

What has the reaction been to your discussions with Earache? Have people been calling you untrue?

"Yes, there are some very few kids claiming that I am not "true"! The people saying this are just jealous and I don't give it much thought. If it is "true" to continue to be an underground band who need to work normally in order to survive then I am "untrue" indeed! I don't play music for any "special" people sitting home and doing nothing, the underground attitude is an excuse for not being able to sell more than a couple thousand records, cowards who don't even dare to try selling lotsa records afraid of failure! I play music mainly to listen to it myself,



but also to make a living of it. I seek power, and money is power, so great record sales is purely great! I don't care who listens to the records, be them nerds, posers, "true" or homosexual (isn't that the same thing? - Ed), I don't care. Also, I don't care what label is selling my records or if they do mosh or anti-mosh attitudes. Anti-mosh is even more childish than mosh, so they are all sort of jerks, that's what I told Earache too. The label's mission is to sell the most possible albums of Burzum and give me money for doing so! Mosh may be ridiculous, but the guy who cares so much about it that he does anti-mosh is even more ridiculous. People with brains find it positive that I (probably) sign to a major label, it only makes it possible for people to get the albums and T-shirts without having to sweat their ass off! (Editor's note: Earache turned Vilkenes down when it emerged that he was a fascist)

How many songs have you written this year and have you recorded the fifth album yet? Any titles?

"I have recorded the fifth album, yes. I have done some new songs, but less than I did in '91 and even '92! I seek more intelligent music now than I did before so it takes more time. The songs keep getting longer too... the fourth album (made in '92) contains four tracks! Average playing time is about 10.30 minutes! On the fifth album I have made songs as long as 30 minutes and as short as 7 minutes! I have begun to do some English lyrics again ('92 was mainly Norwegian). I have no titles for the fifth album so far in English, one song is entitled "Burzum" and another... oh, English: "The Passing of the Now". And a Norwegian one: "Skyggen".

Why did you decide to re-record "A Lost Forgotten Sad Spirit"? Do you plan to re-record anything else?

"I have no plans to re-record any other songs. I did the "Lost Forgotten Sad Spirit" because I felt like doing it, the new version is more like I what I had in mind when I made the song. It was purely for my sake, I kept irritating myself every time I heard the "wrong" tempo in the middle. For others it sounded OK, but it didn't for me as I knew it was supposed to be otherwise. The only reason I did it "wrong" on the debut was because of my bad skill in drumming. I didn't manage to make it slower than I did. I had only played drums for two months on the debut album and at that time I could only play the drumming I did on that album and nothing else. I wanted to see a development in Burzum and that is now what I see in all ways..."

Some of the "Aske" CDs came with a lighter. How many of these were made? Was there not also meant to be a map of Norwegian churches?!

"I don't really know. I have never seen the lighter, DSP were too lazy to send me one. I have heard from a couple of people that there is such a lighter but I don't really know. A map? Not that I know of!"

Will Burzum ever utilise keyboards in the manner that bands like Enslaved, Emperor, etc. do?

"I did that in April '92 so I have done that almost a year before Enslaved and Emperor did it! I am still doing it but not as Emperor and Enslaved. I try to do it as unnoticed and simple as possible!"

Do you make much money from Burzum and is it enough to live on?

"As I told you before, DSP is ripping me off by not keeping his promises in the

contract, that weakens me, but I am surviving purely on Burzum and some other stuff I would prefer to be left out of this interview, illegal stuff so forget it! Sometimes I get lots of money, but sometimes I starve, ups and downs... more ups than downs lately, tanks to better promotion by myself!"

A couple of letters ago you mentioned plans for a promo video. What kind of concepts do you have for this?

"Burzum. The complete concept will be something like creating Burzum on a screen. To touch the feelings of the ones watching the video... and to recreate the essence of the music in a less abstract way than a lyric does. A picture is less abstract than music, no matter how you see it..."

Was the Burzum logo influenced by that of Bathory?

"I wanted to have a medieval looking logo and at the same time no logo at all. I find a logo rather uninteresting if it has nothing to do with the concept (if any) of the band. I view Burzum as a medieval band so I used it. I would do normal letters

Abruptum like I hate cowards like It (I have pictures of you wearing a leather jacket with an Abruptum logo on it and if you say this is bullshit I can send you photocopies of them - Ross). Talking shit about Enslaved? Well, not really. I think they rip me off a lot when it comes to ideas and riffs but I don't view that as talking shit, it's more like telling the truth... MY truth!!! Emperor are a gang of murderers and church burners, but I don't think they'd view that as talking shit! They would most probably take it as a compliment and as a sign of support! I don't like the vocals of Emperor, but that's a matter of taste... good taste when talking about my taste... heh! Abruptum makes me wanna laugh, Enslaved got a fat and ugly guitarist, Emperor look like clowns in corpsepaint, so now It is right! I talk shit about these bands!"

The Lord of the Rings is your favourite book, but what do you think about the rest of the trilogy?

"I hate books like The Lord of the Rings, but the setting is fascinating. Same about The Hobbit, The Silmarillion, Unfinished

Norway! Eurononymous gave them the message... This offer is still on now guys! Well, I won't pay your tickets but you're still welcome to your death on a Norwegian isle! Of course I will bring a submachine gun and shoot you all as I am intelligent, I would not manage to do them all six in medieval combat, maybe three or four, but not six. I view this as intelligence, not cowardice. I tell you this about the SMG because I know they'd never come anyway... Now they know it was a smart choice not to come! Thanks to their cowardice they are still alive (and thanks to yours, one might say, so are you - Ed)."

Do you know anything about Scotland and will Burzum ever come here?

"Well, I know some things... lotsa castles, hilly, lotsa Norwegian blood, long coastline, not much really! Burzum will probably never do a tour anywhere, it is still a one-man band and I view it as a bit too late to get a line-up... That's not my interest at all either, so I won't get one. Samoth was a session bass player on the "Aske" CD/LP, but no member of the band. I hate doing live shows, so I won't. I will do some videos in the future, but no tours or even single gigs! I will maybe go to Scotland, but not as a band!! Maybe as a raging Viking with a sword..."

What are your opinions on Fester, Carpathian Forest and Arcturus? Best Norwegian bands?

"Fester did the ultimate wimp interview in a newspaper and proved to be one of the 5% I talked about earlier in this interview, even more wimpy than Eurononymous, that's all I know about Fester! The others are unknown to me. Probably for a reason, right? I think the best Norwegian bands are Darkthrone and of course my own band. Emperor is okay apart from the irritating vocals. The best Norwegian bands are When and Mental Overload, but that's not metal... Thorns is great too! I must say I like the old Mayhem stuff with Dead on vocals too, but new stuff I prefer played in Singapore and not near me!"

What sort of people are writing to you these days?

"True people, well I don't really know what they are but as I see it most of them are either Nazis, Satanists, girls or simply fans... or any combination of this. There haven't been too many letters from Israel... thanx divine powers for that!"

Concerning the churches you burnt down, were any of them constructed by Vikings or dating back to Viking times?

"Well, I won't admit burning any churches to anybody as that would be stupid of me. The churches have been of different ages, the eldest was 800 years old. The age of the Vikings is 800-1000, so no, no Viking churches. There were no churches in Norway when we were proud Vikings, the first ones appeared when the cowardly moral had won the fight. I hate the Danes and French for their doings. They forced Christianity on us ten to one, COWARDS! I am proud to be a part of the old Viking spirit! I will always consider myself as a man/boy (depends who's talking about me) from the age of the Vikings! Now WE are taking back what is OURS! It has just begun..."

What sort of a funeral do you want? Anything special?

"I wish to be left on a dark altar in a cold, hidden crypt in a deep West Norwegian forest, preferably on high ground like a mountain dressed with forest! Traps shall be laid and that shall be my grave..."

What are the future plans of Burzum?

"Do more albums, films, videos, kill, burn and keep on terrorising my enemies!"



if it had not been the medieval concept. It irritated me that (still does) Gothic letters are very unoriginal, but I don't give a logo much attention so I don't care (still don't). Besides, originality is not everything I seek, I care more for quality..."

What do you think of Unholy burning Burzum LPs at their gigs?

"I hope it becomes a BIG trend in Finland, I will sell more records if that happens! Who the hell is Unholy?! I have never heard of this "band". I hope they do a lot of live shows... keep buying 'em records! THEY ARE HOLY AND YOU ARE UNHOLY! If they burn Burzum albums they will be TRUE as UNHOLY!"

In an interview I did with Abruptum It claims you talk shit about Abruptum, Enslaved and Emperor. Wish to defend yourself?

No, but I will strengthen his claims. Yes, I talk shit about Abruptum. Not Evil of Abruptum, but about It. He is a half-breed, little and stupid like any other gypsy. He is a wimp and nothing else, and if you call this shit - I hate the music of Abrectum..."

Tales and other Tolkien books."

Are you at all interested in fire breathing?

"Well, not really. I am more interested in flame-throwers really..."

Are you familiar with old Viking torture methods like the Blood Eagle?

"No, but I know a form of death (torture, as you call it) called Fly Eagle! It's like fastening a hook to the ribcage and throwing the victim out from a high roof or cliff after fastening the other end of the rope up high. When the rope ends the ribcage will break open and look like the wings of an eagle. I don't know if it was used only on Christians (I doubt it), but I know it was used... I prefer Holmgang, a western way of justice. Two men go, well, row to a little island and only one returns. The one who was right! YEEEEEESSSSS! Actually, I invited Holocausto from Beherit and the pussies from Impaled Nazarene to Norway. We had a struggle and I wanted to finish it by going Holmgang. I told them that I could do them all at the same time (5-6 Finns), but obviously they were too cowardly. I volunteered to fucking pay the tickets to

Ancient Rites are a band perhaps more famous for their biblical length interviews than their records, and this 'un is no exception to the rule. However, that is not to say that the music they play is any less worthy of your attention; in fact, they are one of the most prestigious acts on the continent at the moment and, if their latest effort "Blasfemia Eternal" is anything to go by, look set to stay that way for many years to come.

They play back metal the way death metal is supposed to sound, and in reality there isn't much of a difference. Or wasn't, as the case may be. Whatever, fact of the matter is that they have braved the slings and arrows (and battle-axes and swords) of a trend that, whilst showing signs of petering out, still has the power to corrupt the soundest of minds and the best of intentions.

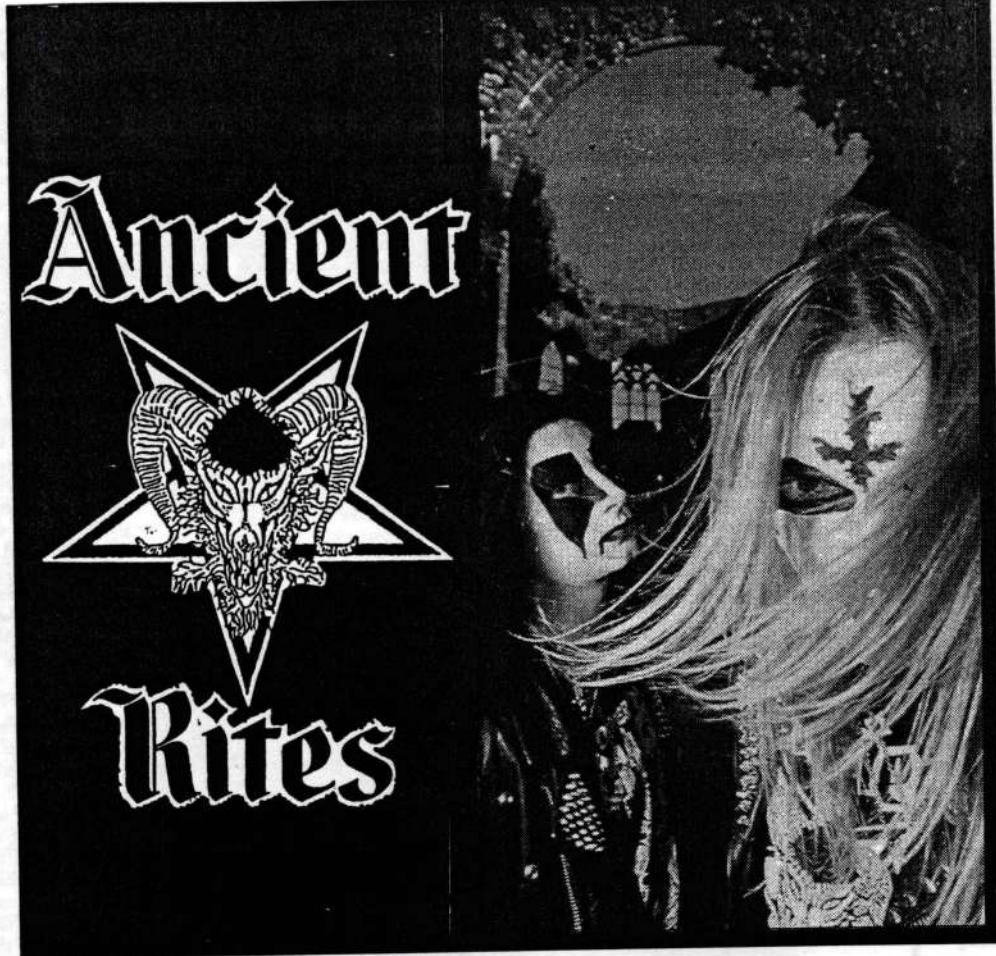
When their long-awaited debut "The Diabolic Serenades" came out in mid-'94 it was immediately taken aback; it was wonderful to hear an album that didn't sound like Darkthrone or Emperor, and vocalist/guitarist Gunther. They seem to agree...

Greetings, Gunther. How are you feeling today? Is there anything interesting in your tape-deck right now?

"Greetings Gregory, I'm fine thank you. At this moment I'm listening to the Italian band Ataraxia. They play some kind of medieval music inspired by ancient Greece, Renaissance and Baroque using French poetry as lyrics. Before I had Current 93 "Lucifer over London", the first Iron Maiden album, Joy Division "Unknown Pleasures", Rotting Christ's "Satanas Tedeum" demo, Arcturus "Constellation", Venom "Welcome to Hell" and GBH "Leather, Bristles, Studs and Acne" on my deck. Later on I plan to listen to Bach and some old obscure Belgian bands such as Brassers and Revenge '88. As you see, my taste is quite wide. I spend a lot of time answering tons of letters/interviews and usually there's music on in the background. In order to avoid boredom variety has to reign, like different kinds of atmospheres/sounds when writing."

I've been listening to your debut CD "The Diabolic Serenades" on pretty much a regular basis since it came out, so first off is the obvious *are you satisfied with the result?* question. How good a job did After Dark do in promoting the release?

"We record our albums in a very professional studio where usually classical orchestras record their symphonies or soundtracks are being made. We felt this would only increase the originality of our sound. We have been assisted by our sound engineer who is a classical musician himself. He understood perfectly the essence of our music and added classical parts to our infernal mayhem whenever asked. We used two different music styles to express the same dark visions/thoughts/dreams. Black metal and medieval music fit perfectly together for both are bombastic and can have a very dark approach. Interesting experiments are tracks such as "Last Rites (Echoes of Melancholy)" or "Fallen Angel" which we first recorded with our usual equipment. Afterwards we replaced the modern instruments with medieval ones. The end result is how Ancient Rites would have sounded like during the



Ancient Rites

middle ages. I know some new bands/fans prefer a "bad" sound and that's fine by me but we always followed our own path regardless of any trends. We are satisfied with our debut "The Diabolic Serenades" considering the time/budget we had available and even believe in our old releases for they have been important steps in our band's career. Nevertheless, our second album entitled "Blasfemia Eternal" is our most professional effort thus far. Concerning After Dark, they failed. Ask anyone, they ripped off too many people including us."

I imagine the market for your kind of music must have increased over the past few years, but how was "The Diabolic Serenades" accepted within a scene that is more used to buying records from Greece, Sweden and Norway?

"Our album received a surprisingly positive response. Several thousand have been sold without decent distribution. After Dark couldn't keep up with the orders and, to be honest, didn't play it fair. Osmose came in to print our debut on a much bigger number while SPV, Nuclear Blast, etc. took care of worldwide distribution. Also, licensing deals have been signed with East European, South American and Asian companies who released "The Diabolic Serenades" on their market available for prices adapted to the economical situation of the countries involved. Of course, financially we did not win anything by releasing our work on these markets but we thought every dark soul regardless of his financial situation should be able to obtain our work. At this moment AR are surrounded by businessmen and parasites who try to gain as much as possible on our sweat. It is hard to trust anyone anymore and our underground dream is shattered because even here big business is corrupting everything. It is impossible to say how many albums we sold because too many labels/people were involved. I am not pointing fingers at all these companies, it is After Dark who had a wrong policy. Their bad reputation took them out of business anyway. Recently we signed to the Dutch label Mascot Records and everything will be more clear now which

should enable us to know the sales of our 2nd work "Blasfemia Eternal".

Recently there has been somewhat of an eighties revival in the metal scene, with an ever-increasing number of bands paying tribute to the likes of Celtic Frost, Sodom, Bathory, etc. What would you say the reasons for this are - is it that music moves in cycles? I mean, until very recently there was a distinctive '70s feeling to everything (and still is, to a certain extent).

"As far as I am concerned, speaking for myself as I don't know how the others in AR see it, it is a matter of longing for those ancient pure underground years of the early '80s. Everything seemed less complicated and I was still very young, at an age where music can touch one's soul to the core, maybe seen through the eyes of a somewhat naive fan. When thinking of the early days of Venom, Hellhammer/Celtic Frost, Bathory (and black metal in general) the myth was still intact for the originators and we, the fans, stood at the cradle of BM and were experiencing the very beginning. Also, one could not be disappointed with the personalities behind the "image" for the musicians seemed to be out of reach. We could not believe they would ever "betray" our style. In our darkness there was a kind of innocence involved. Almost all of my old companions seem to have disappeared from the face of the earth. All those memories, like drinking with Witch Hunter (Sodom) at one of their first gigs outside of Germany, seeing Slayer for the first time they made it to Europe, playing a very primitive kind of black metal ourselves without being able to complete our line-up for there were almost no musicians interested in playing this kind of music back then in Belgium, etc. Nevertheless, I realise my way of thinking here is no real explanation/answer to your question since some very young kids seem to be into those early bands as well these days and they could not have "lived" those years. Could it be youth instinctively recognises the purity of those old releases or maybe this "cycle theory" makes sense? The reason why I am still holding onto early BM is very clear:

I was there, my roots can be found there. It is impossible to speak for others."

Some of the originators of the early black and thrash metal scene are still around today, albeit in a far less significant form than before. What do you think of the recent works by, say, Kreator, Sodom, Bathory, etc.? Do you think they should stand aside now to make way for new blood?

"It is a pity those bands are not as strong as they used to be. I don't think much of their new work. It is better to end in style, but on the other hand maybe they see it differently and truly believe they are better nowadays? Could also be they are used to this life as musicians and not willing to give that up. Others might still be in it for the money only. New blood is important, of course. Nevertheless, I believe it's a bit too disrespectful to simply throw away those who were responsible for creating the scene. No matter how much a band wimps out one should never forget the brilliant records they once made. I remember removing my Venom patch from my leather in anger when they wimped out during the mid

'80s. A few years ago I put it on my jacket again because I could never stop to admire their first two albums. I ignore their other LPs and it is some kind of nostalgia that made me more tolerant. Unfortunately people change and nothing lasts forever... What I hate is that some acts spit on their old work. I can try and understand some wanted something else but killing their own cult like some do is a bit too much. When I like something it will last. Why should I suddenly dislike albums I once adored as a very young kid? I've never cared if a certain style was "cool" or not. Some young kids do not understand my everlasting appreciation for certain old bands, but that is their problem. I still love old Motorhead, which is not a very BM-ish thing to admit, but so what?! I don't feel the need to prove anything to anyone - I'm too old for those games."

On a similar note, some golden oldies are very much alive and kicking. I have Slayer particularly in mind here, but they are often criticised by the mainstream metal press for being stale or out of touch, i.e. untrendy. I don't know about you, but personally I adore "Divine Intervention". Slayer immer noch uber alles, right?

"I heard some songs which are truly great on "Divine Intervention" but as far as I am concerned I still prefer old Slayer. They ruined it a bit for me by collaborating with Ice T, whom I consider a total trend guy. Why do acts like Motorhead, Ozzy and Slayer, which once were the equivalent of pure metal fall for this? It is all so disappointing for me. My fave Slayer albums are "Show No Mercy" and "Reign in Blood". Of course, the second album "Hell Awaits" truly kills but I am sorry to say I never really was into "South of Heaven" (the vocal style on that one is not to my taste) or the other albums. In Ancient Rites Bart is the Slayer fan, but also he's holding onto the older work. Do not misunderstand me, I appreciate Slayer, but for me their old spirit is gone as well. Anyway, I understand/applaud your fanaticism. If you still believe they are as kicking as before I am glad for you. All is depending on one's tastes in the end and

other opinions are of no importance at all. At the time this old spirit being gone, I guess this is happening to all of us sooner or later. I hope we will have the courage to end in grace when Ancient Rites are starting to lose it. I believe that will be no problem, for we are hard on ourselves all the time. It often happens that people congratulate us after a gig while we remain unhappy nevertheless for we thought it was shit. I am sure we will never betray our style/roots, though. We learned from the mistakes others made..."

Don't you think that there are too many unwritten laws in the underground these days? I do, especially where black metal is concerned... *Thou shalt not listen to anything but the blackest of the black, thou shalt paint thy face, thou shalt not have a sense of humour, thou shalt swear allegiance to those considered 'true' and talk shit about those who are not...* Thou shalt fucking kiss my ass! I'll say and do whatever I like, thank you very much. I know that Ancient Rites is a particularly individual outfit, so have you taken much flak for this over the years?

"Of course. Once we were booked to headline a show and the promoter said we had to paint our faces. We went on stage without of course. Some minors criticise us a bit for not sounding like Immortal or Cradle Of Filth. Usually it is the ones who discovered the style overnight who are the worst. Whatever happened to individuality? I don't want to sound like a boring old fart who keeps on glorifying the past but in the early days of BM an own sound/identity was respected. Bathory differed from Venom, as they did from Celtic Frost and all were considered to be "true" (I'm sick of this word). I appreciate the fanaticism of certain people and also I want to protect the BM scene from people who do not understand the essence but let us not become paranoid. Our path never has been easy and many do not relate to our way but it will not keep us from going. I've heard Malcolm Dome of Kerrang hates our guts after seeing us at the Marquee. Kerrang criticised Venom and Voivod in the old days so I believe we are in good company. Maybe more people will get into our style long after we are all gone? At least at the end of the day we're able to say we created music WE related to, regardless of anyone or anything. I sympathise with your attitude, Gregory. Do what thou wilt!"

I share your fascination for ancient history - always have - especially where the civilisations of the Romans and Celts are concerned. Is there a particular reason for your passion for bygone days? Do you, for example, agree that today's society is far too middle-of-the-road? Are there too many fence-sitters and not enough people who take pride in their own roots and identities?

"It is a passion that has always been there. As a kid I dreamt that behind the wall of our garden I saw a mountain with an unreachable Roman temple on it. Everything was in a red sunset light typical to the summers of my childhood. On the surrounding garden walls there were ancient weapons and I tried to reach for an old rusty Roman helmet. I was always disappointed when waking up. I was about seven years old. This feeling of vastness created in my dream I will never forget. When I was eight I had this dream where I was a sniper of the Wehrmacht. I was hiding in a tree waiting for the GIs to come to hold them up a bit in order to give my comrades who were trying to withdraw some extra time. I was an idealist who realised the war was lost and was about to die but who nevertheless decided to fight 'til his last breath. It is very strange I had dreams like that because I am no German and have always had a good relationship with my family of which some have been partisans. That means I didn't hear any Nazi propaganda or anything... I do not believe in reincarnation but as a kid I had my doubts and started to presume that I had been a Nazi stormtrooper in a previous life. On another occasion I dreamed I was undergoing an

amputation of my leg on the battlefield of Waterloo, surrounded by thousands of wounded/dead soldiers for the battle was over. I did not know which side I was on but I remember the saw cutting my flesh and above all the pain for there was no anaesthesia. I was very good at history back at school and also my father knew how to stimulate this interest by passing on some interesting books and speaking about our ancestors, the Germanic tribes. However instinctively I related to history from the very beginning, it became a true passion which I cultivated a bit as time passed by. Nowadays I travel a lot and have seen with my own eyes many of the ancient temples, medieval/ancient cities, castles, ruins, etc. I learned about ages ago. I believe everyone is a child of his own time but often a strong feeling of melancholy takes over when I dream of empires/civilisations which are forever buried by time and dust. How to explain instincts or fascinations? My father is an officer in the Special Forces and boys look up to well trained armies, but he also was a good football player and this did not touch my soul apart from the bit of pride I felt when he scored. Young kids look up to their parents and can be influenced but my folks always left me a free choice. They never really tried to push me into a certain direction. Even to this very day they are more like close friends to me instead of parents. Probably I'll still be occupied by history long after AR is dead. It is true, a lot of pride is lost in today's society. I ran into some people who said they wouldn't mind if tomorrow Belgium would be declared Zulu land! This I cannot understand. Naturally in the middle ages people weren't that noble either but at least unity could be found! Arabs tried to invade Belgium in medieval times but our population stood as one and kicked their asses back to Moslem territory. Vikings tried to invade but were slaughtered at Leuven which was a powerful city in medieval times. Those days are over. Therefore I envy those Moslem countries. They immediately stand as one when facing a cultural enemy. Their countries also have to deal with problems between extreme (fundamentalists) and less extreme believers but somehow more unity can be found. Not politically, but between people on the street. On my travels through North Africa I felt the animosity towards me for they could tell I did not share their god/culture. After all, I was only a passenger but they still considered me a threat. They still have this medieval attitude concerning

the protection of their identity which is the only positive aspect of their ignorance."

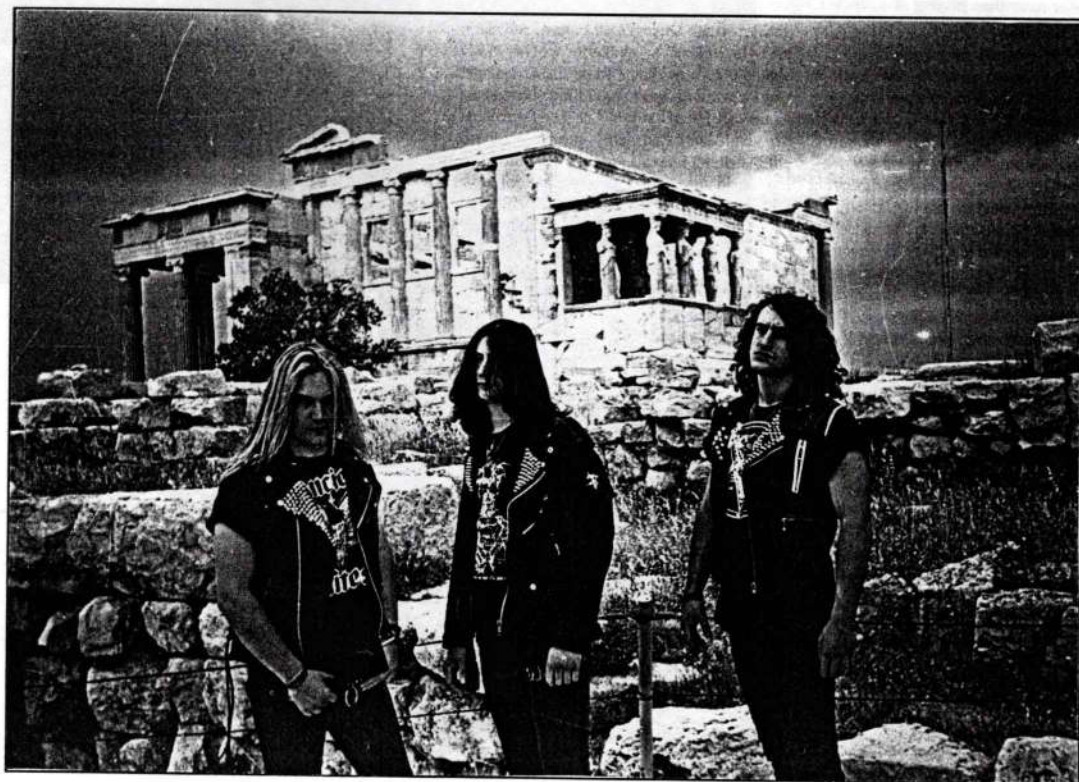
There is, however, a fine line to be drawn between patriotism and bigotry, right? Bands like Enslaved have found the perfect balance, but some of the people using swastikas and so on are taking things a little too far, I think. Without wanting to turn this mag into some kind of a soap box, I'd appreciate your views on this. Fascism, elitism and basically just attitudes in general within the metal scene.

"We are not a political band. Maybe my views are nihilistic but I do not interfere in a person's choice. As long as the individual treats me with respect and does not try to force his views down my throat I have no problem with anything. I cannot or will not judge. AR is becoming a bit more known and I am in touch with people all over the globe holding opposite views to each other but who are all supportive towards my band so I cannot permit myself to interfere in their battle. It wouldn't be a healthy situation as I would always insult certain parties. I cannot hit the people who offer me their allegiance. I appreciate fanaticism when it based on knowledge. I'd be the first to fight, for instance, the Moslem troops if they ever would try to attack my country but this does not mean I can't respect the enemy. I was opposed to Saddam Hussein but I could understand his desire to restore the Babylonian empire. I appreciated his battle against the entire world like I respect the strength of Israel as a small country surrounded by enemies. Could be that with growing older I have learned to place myself in someone else's position. I will never contradict myself, but lately every word I say seems to be "investigated". I received a phonecall the other day from a guy who tried to organise an AR gig. When I do not know a person I have a tendency to use our official language and to avoid dialect in order to make myself understood and to be polite. A few days later I ran into people who know this promoter and they asked me why I treated him in an arrogant way and if it was possible I had turned into a rockstar. I didn't catch their drift and later on it became clear my use of language (not words!) had made the promoter feel uncomfortable. This way gossip based on misinterpretation and ignorance is created and held against me. People can be so tiring the moment you get a bit more known. I always see to it that no one will be able to accuse me of becoming a rockstar and often I buy people I know a beer.

Months later, the bartender tells me they translated this small gesture of mine as a sign of arrogance. I had to give autographs when I entered a club recently and many started to look at me in a strange way. I mean, I did not ask for it! Believe me, I have to deal with other problems instead of people's political preferences. So many start to turn basic things such as communication into a complex thing. I guess I have to live with it. At least it proves our band is being noticed in this overcrowded scene. If I did not answer your question satisfactorily I am sorry."

The Belgian underground is perhaps most famous for Agathocles and their oh-so-politically-correct lyrics. Have you had any problems with them or similarly opinionated bands in the past? Sometimes I feel our hardcore "buddies" are even worse than the black metal thoughtpolice I mentioned before with all their little slogans and buy-or-die views. Don't get me wrong here - I'm all for freedom of speech, but preaching is something I cannot bear!

"Couldn't agree more. These fighters for "peace and tolerance" usually do not practise what they preach. There were some problems between our and Agathocles' fans at early concerts. Once they were attacked because on stage they were insulting everyone into metal. I cannot stand fake intellectuals. Jan (vox/bass) and Burt (drums) I know for many years and it is a fact we do not share views. The only thing we have in common and appreciate of each other is the fact that both Agx and AR are steady forces in the underground for many years. We played a gig together a couple of months ago and the atmosphere was a tense one referring to our following. Agx started to preach and overdid the political aspect once again, also forcing vegetarian life codes down everyone's throat. Later we came on glorifying the dark side and the power of ancient civilisations. I can imagine those who came to see AR could not relate to the message of Agx while the core people present must have thought nothing of our infernal mayhem. AR and Agx fight different battles but we stopped wasting energy on fighting each other... During the early eighties I went to underground concerts of all sorts but I soon felt not to be appreciated at HC gigs. I was not into that style but curiosity and the fact that some bands played extreme music made me go there. My biggest mistakes: comments because I was wearing a leather, angry looks because I was drinking alcohol, animosity



since I was smoking and ordering a bacon sandwich. Fuck off! Never have I met such intolerant people as the ones into core..."

Computers seem to be featuring more and more prominently in music these days. Are you frightened that metal too will eventually become as bastardised as, say, the pop music scene or does it excite you to think of all the "amazing" possibilities this new technology supposedly has to offer?

"Computers take over. Look at me! I am answering this interview by using a computer while I do not even know that much about technology. It helps me to save time (erasing mistakes is made easier by a computer) since I am drowning in mail all the time. Practical reasons pushed me towards the use of computers. Yet sometimes this machine seems to have its own will and screws things up by causing problems I cannot solve. It makes me feel like an illiterate. I am not computer minded enough. I even considered taking computer lessons but on the other hand technology may start to rule one's life, or take over music like nowadays is more and more the case. I gratefully accept the advantages of being able to work with this thing but that's where it ends as far as I am concerned. Metal is bastardised more and more these days and not only by computers unfortunately."

You seem an intelligent person, but how much of your knowledge comes from school and how much is self-taught? Do you think that it is important to further our education on our own to maintain a healthy balance?

"Thank you for rating my intelligence that high. Nevertheless I think my knowledge is too limited, this is no fake modesty. Life/time is passing by too fast and there's so much more to learn still. High school is not practical. I was good at history, speak four almost five foreign languages and yet they did not let me pass to cultivate these small talents for I was weak in algebra. I took my diploma at art school but unfortunately there was no possibility to specialise in languages, psychology, archaeology, etc. I'd like to go to university as a free student to increase my knowledge but since AR is dominating most of my life I'm afraid there is no time for this... However, I intend to change my life a bit and find a balance. Now only music is reigning my world but that is not enough. Life should offer more than playing in a band. I am perfectly content with AR and Danse Macabre (my second band formed in Greece with Magus of Rotting Christ/Necromantia and Sotiris of Septic Flesh) but I want more and to explore other worlds apart from music. I had a small career as a painter before AR got more known but due to lack of time I had to give it up, at least for the time being. A healthy mind in a healthy body is my goal and since I enjoy the "good" things in life a bit too much I seek a balance. I started sports again. Always being surrounded by drunk and drugged people connected with AR and leading an extreme way of life on the road forces me to keep in condition in order to maintain control. I try to make the best of this time I have on earth but addiction is something I definitely wish to avoid. I can be intelligent enough but I have a split personality: reason and chaos are always fighting each other to take my life in a certain direction. Both are a part of me which sometimes can lead to schizo situations."

You've been part of the scene for many years now, and will undoubtedly have witnessed many shifts in style, trends, etc. What would you say is going to be the next big thing in metal?

"I have seen many shifts in style and trends indeed. Enough to understand that music an everything surrounding it is far too unpredictable to even make a guess at what

will be the next big thing. When AR was created almost no one was interested in our work. Suddenly we started to receive tons of letters, almost from one day to the other. Nowadays our demo is selling more than it ever did. Therefore I do not expect anything from our future for it can be over sooner than we think. The same goes for life in general. To all those bands who are so full of themselves I can only say one thing: get off your cloud, nothing lasts forever. It is kinda pathetic to see them behave like stars, listening to their own records all the time. I know many bands in a way the average fan will never see them, believe me. Many are so tiring and spoiled while having achieved nothing really, especially in the BM scene. Self-respect is one thing but..."

Could you ever see yourself moving to

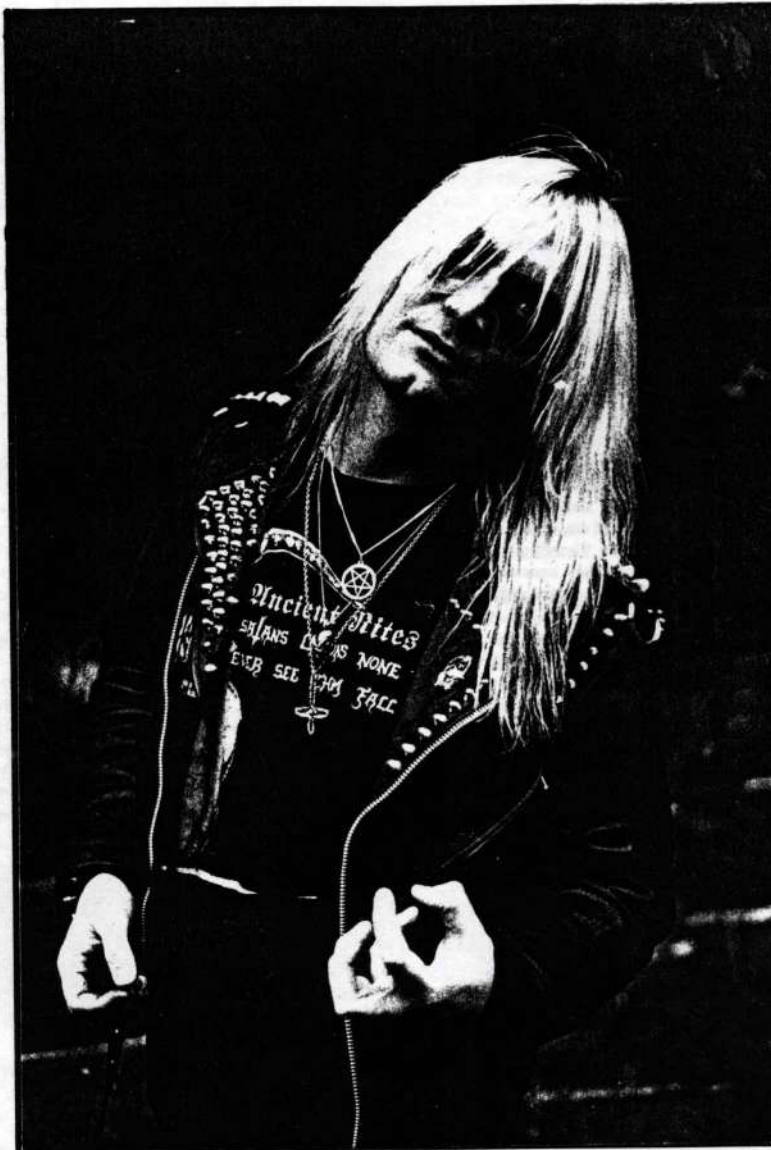
The same expression can mean the difference of worlds. I spend a lot of time there and usually they appreciate me being different. However, they consider me more and more as one of them. Often I introduce Greek people to each other or take them to places they don't even know. I myself keep on discovering other interesting pubs, clubs and tavernas all the time. When foreign friends come to visit me in Greece I take them to museums, ancient temples and give some information about them. I get in for free in different places and receive lots of free beer or tequila. I know almost the entire music scene in Athens, from traditional bouzouki musicians to Rock or metal musicians, labels, DJs, VJs, etc. Also many people outside of the music scene. I get heavy reductions at the hotel I always stay at, attend weddings, birthday celebrations, name anniversaries

door under this medieval gate. My family are like brothers and sisters to me (that figures - Ed) and I know too many people to just leave them behind just like that. We have a strong beer culture and I'm familiar with many owners of many beer and wine cellars. To leave that behind is madness. Besides, Ancient Rites must remain a Belgium located band. We draw more and more people when playing live and nowadays we receive full support. We've created hordes which are following us. Finally I can start to be proud of our scene. Pride is restored and our following are waving our national (Flemish) banners at our gigs and start to appreciate/learn our Flemish history. My goal is achieved. Leaving them now would be an insult. I start to miss Greece now for it has been a month since I left Athens. However, when being there for a month I am longing for the woods and fields of my beloved Flanders and the people close to me. My solution is never to really settle down in one country. In between tours and my staying in Greece or Belgium I often travel to other countries as well. That is the reason why it takes such a long time before I can answer mail. I'm almost never home. I feel terribly restless when there are no tours, trips or travels planned. Gregory, you seem to be incredibly well informed."

Why thank you. Had much luck with the womenfolk lately? I heard Belgian girls can be a bit much, so do you think you'll settle for a Greek lass instead? Is there, do you think, such a thing as love anyway? Kind of a wimpy question there...

"I will never settle for a Belgian girl again. They are so terribly spoiled and materialistic. I've always felt suffocated in their presence. They loved me in their own way but it wasn't my path. They have this tendency to castrate the ones they are going steady with. I will NEVER allow this. I am not a sexist or a phalocrat and equal rights are important in order to have a healthy relationship, but their dreams differed too much from mine. What I hate is that many Belgian women screw around from a very young age but once they go steady they want to be treated like they're made out of most expensive china holding hypocritical values and judging everyone but forgetting their slut-like past. They don't allow their boyfriends to have a drink with the guys like in the old days, always being on their backs about the alcohol or smoking. It makes me wanna puke! Often they tell me they do not understand or approve of my ways but the feeling is mutual. I have a few Belgian female friends but we don't take it any further. There are a few women elsewhere in the world I have a special bond with and who could be described as soulmates, some of them being very attractive too. However, I do not take it further for the disappointment would be too big when there would be a change in their behaviour once we start a relationship. It is a thin line between love and hate. True love as in fairytales

does not exist but true appreciation which can lead to a relationship is possible. Funny thing is, I met a few interesting women almost at the same time, certainly not of the one-night-stand kind. It would have led somewhere but I could not make a choice! My last relationships have been in Greece. Women are fantastic there... so much soul, pride and strength while being shy at the same time. That blows me away! When they realise you're not a guy into cheap thrills and show honest respect they start to appreciate you that much it becomes dangerous. They carry a lot of passion inside which is locked up for a very long time. Extremely feminine. I've met several virgins over 25 years old that are very pretty! Impossible to find elsewhere in Europe... maybe Spain, Italy or Portugal conservative values are very strong but I'm sure Greece is the most old-fashioned



Greece on a permanent basis if life in Belgium became too unbearable? Having sampled the lifestyles of both countries, how would you say they compare? Seems to me you have a lot of friends and supporters in Greece... perhaps more so than in your homeland?

"Life in Northern and Southern Europe cannot be compared; codes differ too much. Once I was in a club in Greece and due to circumstances and misunderstandings I had a verbal fight with a guy. I used the term "fuck you" which we use in my country to end the bullshit and walk away but before I knew it I was in the middle of an extreme fight, both parties blood all over. In Greece it has a different meaning to say "fuck you". It means "we must duel NOW!" Funny in a way. Afterwards it became clear and we shook hands. It was a clash of different cultures.

(which are more important than birthdays there). The Greek Metal Hammer once had our band name on the front cover with underneath as a subtitle referring to me: "New citizen of Athens" as in ancient times they gave this title to important people of the Athenian community. It was a friendly gesture on their behalf. Many specialised clubs can be found there (in Athens): metal clubs playing old Venom, Destruction, Frost, Whiplash, Demon, Rotting Christ, Immortal, Ancient Rites, etc. Specialised Goth places where people are dressed in a vampiric or Victorian way, women wearing wedding clothes and so on. The underground is very much alive there. I adore our castles and medieval cities in a cold curtain of winter mist under a full moon. I live in a medieval city myself; my parents' home here is a protected monument. Bats live next to our

concerning romanticism. Brilliant! I know a very special person there who carries inside everything I seek in a woman and her dedication to me is admirable, since a few years we are close. My problem is I immediately seek for possible negative aspects. When something is fine I have this tendency to question it, always making life more difficult than it really is. Are we not getting carried away here?"

Yes, we most certainly are so let's get back to musical matters once again...

How will Ancient Rites sound on future recordings? Will you remain as uncompromisingly heavy as before or will you be experimenting a little? Personally I'd prefer the former, but I'm sure a little development wouldn't harm your sound too much. You're more of a heads-down-and-crush type band anyway, right?

"We try to offer variety without betraying our sound/style. In the studio we try out different things within the so-called limits of our genre. Live, however, we are indeed a 'heads-down-and-crush' type band. Our new album will surprise many for it differs from the other BM releases. A lot of time was spent on the production. Also, there's a wider range of emotions/atmospheres and several languages are used. From a musical point of view it is an interesting release as well. AR will always remain a very dark band but it is only natural; to keep on progressing as musicians. We'll make sure we don't lose the right feeling though. It is not even a challenge because we simply follow our instincts and they always lead us to the darkest forms of music. Our music will never be accepted by the masses, let alone our views."

So Gunther, finally we have come to the end of this monumental interview. I thank you for your time and hope that my 'different' questions weren't too different. Or personal, for that matter...

Finish off as you wish, perhaps giving us a list of your favourite releases of 1995 and some EP or fanzine recommendations. Cheers and all the best for the future!

"It was a pleasure doing this interview. Inspiring too. Heart and soul are reflected in my words, no pose or anything but I am sure you understood that. Some interesting releases? "Constellation" (Arcturus), "Panzerfaust" (Darkthrone), "The Sun of Tiphareth" (Absu), "For Funerals to Come" (Katatonia) and also some Club Wave Classics compilations, "Gothic Rock part 2" (Goth compilation, double CD). This year I bought a few Current 93 albums, the first two Destruction releases on CD (my vinyl versions are played too often). Ulver is a band to keep an eye on - check out "Bergtatt". I received the Blood Axis advance which is quite interesting and "Amen" (Christian Death). The list is endless basically since I listen to different kinds of dark music. I support underground 'zines, one of the best around is Ablaze (printed on 6000 copies), but one has to be able to read German to understand which is no problem for me. Still, I think and English edition would help the 'zine a lot on a worldwide scale. All is said and done. Keep the dark flame burning and hail to Scotland!"

Ancient Rites c/o Theys Gunther, Kraaienneststraat 11, 3290 Diest, Belgium.



I wasn't expecting to get this one back, but when it eventually did pop through my letter box I kinda wished it hadn't.

Illdisposed's music appears to have taken a turn for the worse since the release of their incredible "Return from Tomorrow" mini-CD, but some of you might be interested in hearing the new full-length "Submit". Personally I find it a little boring, so you'd probably be better to check out the aforementioned mini or their debut album "Four Depressive Seasons". Ho-hum, such is life.

Hi there, introduce yourself!

"Hey, this is Rolf from Illdisposed - trying to entertain you for the next few minutes!"

It's been quite a while since the release of your "Return from Tomorrow" MCD, so could you let us know what has been happening in the Illdisposed camp since then? Are you still happy with "RFT"?

"Phew! Lost drummer - got new drummer - wrote new songs - made a 3-track promo tape - kicked out drummer - found new drummer - made more songs - recorded them in a studio in Horsens, DK - toured in Germany. All of this, of course, was carefully mixed with arguments, beers and girls. The "RFT" CD still shreds, but the drum sound should've been much better."

On "Return..." you sound a lot more violent than before. Have you become more pissed off or something?

"I don't think we're more pissed off, we've just grown towards our real style. You'll hear a similar difference on our new CD "Submit". The violence will always grow with Illdisposed."

Considering your approach to brutal deathrock isn't particularly novel, you still manage to come out with incredibly fresh sounding material. How?

"Well, we try to create something that's brutal and has the right groove and Illdisposed sound. From where it comes I don't really know. From alcohol maybe."

How does your new material sound compared to the rather wimpy compilation track you did for NB's "Death... is just the Beginning 3"?

"Well, "Withering Teardrops" was where the style was going just before Michael left the band. Don't worry, our new material will crush you. You'll have to take my word for it until you find out how our new material is sounding."

I was pretty disappointed when I saw the cover for "RFT", as the one you had for your debut LP is superb! Why didn't you use Rolf M. for the mini-CD and will you work with him again in future?

"It was only a mini-CD, a follow-up from our European tour. We didn't think it was going to be this popular, so we took it lightly with the cover. Rolf M. also didn't have anything we could use at that moment and we wanted to release it as fast as possible. Rolf M. will not assist us on our new release "Submit" I'm afraid."

Are you happy with the licensing deal you have with Nuclear Blast?

"Well, of course we're satisfied with the deal with NB. They have opened up half of Europe and the USA for us, but I really don't know how they promote us. I just know that they do it."

Are live shows an important part of Illdisposed? Which have been your most memorable performances to date?

"We rule live!! I live for playing live and when you do it with a good mix of beer and other intoxicants it's the greatest. Ehrm! Memorable performances??? Erm, yep. Memorable. You see, that's the problem. You can never quite remember how the gig was the morning after."

Your lyrics are pretty weird for a death metal band. Can you tell us some more about them? What, for example, is "Inherit the Wind" about?

"Bo writes the lyrics, so I really can't enlighten you on that issue. We are all a bit puzzled about his lyrics, but I can tell you that when he writes he sits alone, surrounded with beers. I guess it's up to people to make their own interpretations of the lyrics. I asked Bo what the lyrics from "Inherit the Wind" were about and he said "Beer & Pussy", so there you are!!!"

What the fuck is going on in the intro for "With the Lost Souls on our Side"? Any secret hobbies would should know about that involve vaseline and sheep? Whose idea was it?

"You're right. The fuck is going on during that intro and Bo is speaking German to the sheep. Whose idea? Well, we just bugged his bedroom. Bo wasn't angry about the recording. He just wished we had filmed him doing it."

Denmark's scene is growing all the time, what with Konkhra, Invocator, etc. all with a few LPs under their collective belt. Which bands should we look out for?

"Well, look out for Grope and Eidetic. They'll make it! I'm sorry to say this but Invocator has split up. Check out their latest (and last) "Dying to Live". I haven't really that much to say about the Danish scene. It's growing, but I don't keep myself up-to-date

with it. I don't listen to that much death metal, but when I do it's time for Cathedral, At The Gates, Morbid Angel and Fear Factory."

Denmark is technically a part of Scandinavia, yet so far has remained virtually unscathed by the all-engulfing black metal trend. How come?

"Danes have a lot of humour and they can't really take something like Darkthrone and all the other Norwegian shit bands serious that burn down churches (6-900 years old) just to see which one is more evil than the other. Perhaps that's why it hasn't settled in Denmark yet."

What is there for pissed Danes to do when they're not creating crushing death metal? Do you work or is the unemployment situation as bad as it is here?

"Bo, Lasse and Ronnie are working. Morten Gilsted is unemployed and I'm studying at the local university, so we all have something to do when we're not drinking. The unemployment situation has taken a turn for the better, but education wanted by the employers. There are a few good clubs in our home town, but the best is by far The House which brings us great shows from all kinds of music."

Denmark's main exports to the UK are bacon and butter. Are there any British foodstuffs that are equally popular in Denmark? Haggis perhaps...

"Haggis?? Never heard of it. But what we know well are fish'n'chips (yummie) and baked beans. I don't think that foodstuffs are DK's biggest import from the UK. I think it's British comedy. I'm a great admirer of Rik Mayall, Alexei Sayle and John Cleese. The Young Ones, Bottom and Monty Python are the greatest series ever made!"

That's all I have to ask you. Is there anything you'd like to add?

"Humm! Check out our new CD "Submit" and watch out for our debut video on MTV's Headbanger's Ball. Go Laudrup + Rangers!"

Illdisposed/Progress Records, Vindegade 101, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark



decoryah

In case my credibility isn't quite down the pan yet, here's an interview with the Finnish masters of melancholia Decoryah to finish the job...

Denser than your average Pantera fan and twice as wimpy (seen from a death metal point of view), their music is simply divine. Elements of gothicism shrouded in layer upon layer of infinitely deep atmospherics make the awesome foursome one of my definite favourite bands, and I'm not afraid to admit it. Naturally, I would have preferred to feature an all-new and up-to-date interview conducted by myself instead of this old (but not entirely uninteresting) one Ross did with his friend Mikko Laine, but then you know what I'm like...

To begin please give a brief history of Decoryah.

"Decoryah was formed in late 89, various line-up changes over the years. Line-up is now: Jukka Vuorinen (vocals & guitar), Jani Kakko (lead guitar), Mikko Laine (drums) and Jonne Valtanen (keyboards). Was that brief enough?"

Perfect! Tell us about the CD, i.e. which label it will be out on, release date, etc.

"Actually, we're at the very moment in the studio (today is 27th July!). The CD will be called 'Wisdom Floats', it will have 11 songs and I guess it will be about 60 minutes long. Maybe a few minutes longer or shorter, I'm not sure. Some titles are: 'Wisdom Floats', 'Circle Immortality', 'Cosmos Silence', 'Infinity Awaits', 'Astral Mirage of Paradise', 'When the Echoes Start to Fade', 'Reaching Melancholian', etc. It's very likely that Witchunt will release that CD though we haven't signed the deal yet. Sorry, but I don't have any idea of the release date. Hopefully soon!"

You have released a 7" on Witchunt Records... details. What other stuff has Witchunt released?

"Yes, it's out on Witchunt and it's called 'Ebonies'. It has 'Cosmos Silence' and 'Astral Mirage of Paradise' tracks, which were both on the 'CS' demo, but those tracks are remixed and partly re-recorded for the EP. The sound is not the best, but it's okay and it also has a full colour cover! So order it for \$5 (Europe) or \$6 (elsewhere) from Jukka or Witchunt. Witchunt has pretty recently released EPs from Vomitory (Swedish death metal band), Vibrion (grind from Argentina) and Celestial Season (Holland, doom). I think CS's EP is OK, but I don't like those others so much. Witchunt released also Xerxes' CD which is totally magnificent and original. Everyone get it! Before Decoryah's CD they'll also release CDs from Mayfair and Sadness. Everyone support Witchunt, you won't be ripped off!"

Decoryah has an original sound, so what bands/musical styles are you into? Are the lyrics as original as the music?

"Thanx for the compliment! Well, what I listen to doesn't really influence so much Decoryah's sound as I don't make any riffs, etc. Anyway, I'm mostly into doom, black, gothic, darkwave, and experimental stuff and I also like some Industrial. To name a few of my favourite bands isn't one of the

easiest tasks as I have so many of them, but some are: Thergothon, Unholy, Monumentum, Eterne, Mordor, Emperor, Bathory, Tiamat, Anathema, Sinoath, Rotting Christ, Sigh, Varathron, Katatonia, Godsend, Necromantia, etc. for underground metal bands. I'm also into a lot of bands/artists like Dead Can Dance, Enya, Sisters Of Mercy, Leonard Cohen, Fields Of The Nephilim, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Danzig, The Doors, etc. In my opinion our lyrics are very original."

You told me you were going to start your own label in 1994. I assume you won't be signing any "boring trendy death metal bands", so who will you sign? Does it not cost a lot of money to start a record label?

"Yes, I have thought this. I was supposed to start with Eterne's debut CD in '94, but now they're signed to Candlelight instead. In a way I'm happy with that, it's good for Eterne and I don't have to hurry. So I have no hard feelings with Eterne, they are a great band and deserve all the support you can give them. Hi Dave! As I said, I don't want to hurry now, I want to wait until everything is ready, when I have a good band and enough money. I hope I can start with CDs straight away 'cause there are so many of those 7" labels around. You're right, I won't sign any usual and trendy bands and neither am I going to release any grind/noise/thrash/HC, etc. stuff. I will sign bands that are original and dark. I'll only sign bands I'm 100% into. Of course it takes a lot of money to start a label, but hopefully I get enough money to start the "business" soon. But it isn't 100% sure that the label will be started, more like 99% sure!"

I don't understand the meaning of Decoryah. Perhaps you could enlighten me?

"Which one do you mean - the name or the whole existence of Decoryah? I guess you mean the name. To most people it doesn't mean anything, but it has a special meaning to us. It can't be described here, it's something

too personal."

When is the second issue of Uriliah coming out? Which bands will be featured in it?

"I guess around November or so, as soon as we get our shit together. It was originally supposed to come out in earlier Autumn, but now as we record our CD and all that stuff we haven't so much time for the mag. Some bands that are already interviewed are Eterne, Sigh, Mordor, Monumentum, Katatonia, Ancient Rites, The Gathering, etc., but it will have much more stuff and that's a promise. By the way, issue one is still available for \$5 (Europe) and \$6 (elsewhere). It has interviews with bands like Burzum, Rotting Christ, Unholy, Impaled Nazarene, Anathema, Church Of Misery, Varathron, Unburied, etc. It has 48 pages."

Is Finland a big place for black metal bands and what do you think of the scene in general? Which are the best bands?

"Well, I don't think it's very big, but quite OK though. I think that the Finnish scene is truly magnificent, one of the best scenes around. Lots of great bands like Unholy, Thergothon, Beherit, Impaled Nazarene, Black Crucifixion, Barathrum, Sentenced and so on. Also some great mags like Hammer of Damnation, Elysium, Hellspawn, Diarum Autopsia, etc."

Do Decoryah play many gigs? How does the crowd react?

"No, not really. With this line-up and style we haven't played even a single gig and with the earlier line-up (I wasn't in the band then) only one gig was played. Anyway, I'm not that into gigs, ours or others', but I guess we'll go on stage sometime, maybe after our CD is released? Then we'll see how the crowd reacts."

Are you into any of the newer death metal stuff? Perhaps something like Pan-Thy-Monium...

"Well, only a few bands. Pan-Thy-Monium

are OK, and also Astral Rising are fairly original and good. I haven't followed the death metal scene anymore so much, so there might be some good new bands that I haven't checked out. Oh, I also heard that new Dissection album kills, so I think I'd better check it out!"

What was the last gig you went to and were you drunk?

"I really don't go to gigs that often. The last one was with a local band, I can't even remember their name. Yes, of course I was drunk. I usually am drunk while going to gigs except when the band is something totally special to me. Then I might go sober to enjoy the band's music 100%!"

How much of your time is take up with music? Do you think that without music there is a huge gap in your life?

"Almost all my time. I still study and all the time that leaves I spend with music. I also sometimes go to gym, I think it's pretty enjoyable, but otherwise I hate sports! Yes, absolutely. There would be an enormous gap in my life without music. I live for music."

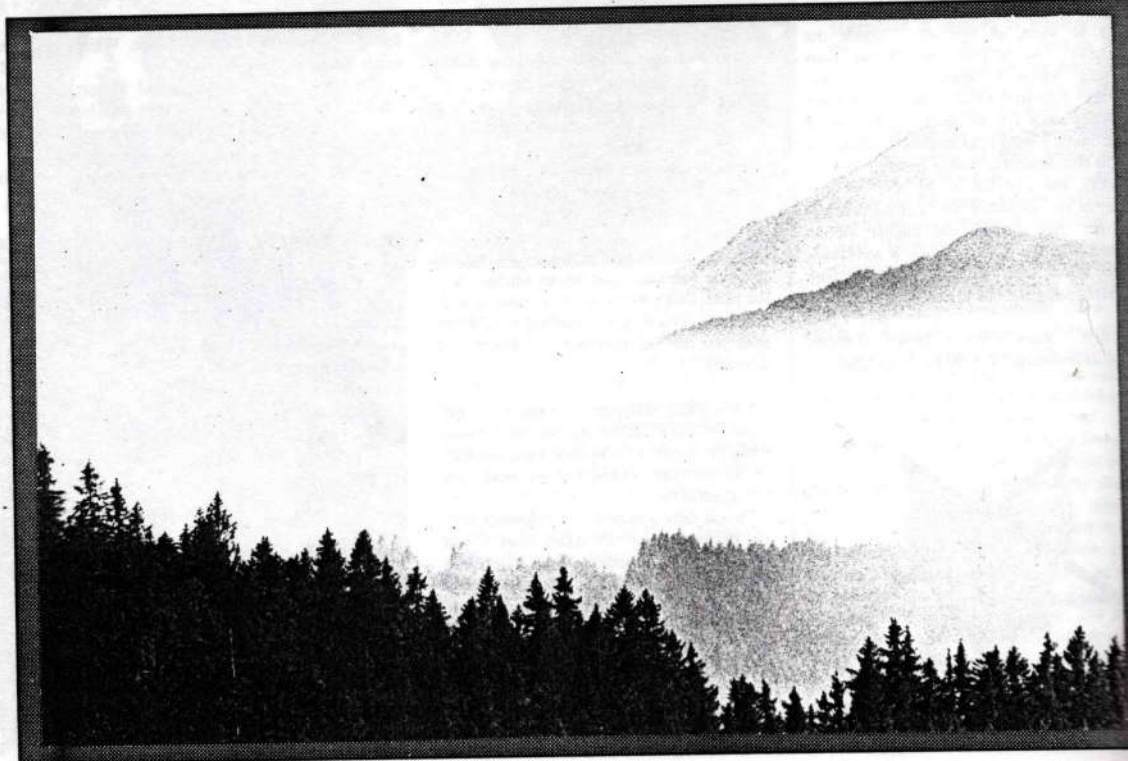
Leave us with your last words, merchandise and future plans for Decoryah.

"Thanks for your support. Future plans are to get our CD out. Merchandise available is our 'Cosmos Silence' demo for \$5 and \$6 from Jukka's address and the 'Ebonies' EP from Witchunt or Jukka. All band mail to Jukka, for info enclose IRC. All questions concerning Uriliah Magazine to my (Mikko) address. Hello to Walteen from Unburied, Oli from Tales of Sadness and to you Ross."

Uriliah Magazine c/o Mikko Laine, Jussinniityntre 10, 20780 Kaarina, Finland.

Decoryah c/o Jukka Vuorinen, Pilvikatu 1, 20780 Kaarina, Finland.

Witchunt Records, PO Box 658, 8029 Zurich, Switzerland.





four funerals and a wedding...

As the dying sun bleeds its last over the desolate forests of a thousand haunted dreamlands a solitary ravenry pierces the growing darkness like a knife through flesh. This mournful funeralullaby is one of despondency, sorrow and despair, of Katatonia...

Ross interviewed Blackheim a while after the "Jhva Elohim Meth" demo was released as a mini-CD by Vic Records. Since then there has been a delightfully dreary debut disc (how's that for an alliteration!), "Dance of the December Souls", on No Fashion, two compilation tracks for Wrong Again Records and a mini-album for Avantgarde Music ("For Funerals to Come"). Sadly, Blackheim has decided to put the project on ice for the time being, but promises that it will be back from the dead sometime in the future.

When was Katatonia started? What is the concept behind the band?

"Katatonia was re-brought to existence in the middle of '91. The band had already been around for a couple of years before, but with some unstable conditions... We want to spread as much sorrow and depression as possible, and to pervert souls to join our musical funeral..."

Would you describe Katatonia as black, death or something else?

"Looking at it in a wide view, we're a death metal band. We'd rather choose to name our music gothic black funeralism, though."

Your LP/CD will be out on No Fashion Records soon. Tell us a bit about it and your deal with NFR.

"This debut album is entitled "Dance of the December Souls" and features about 6 long completely new mournful compositions and one older song from the demo. All in all, around 53 minutes of slow and heavy burden. About our deal with No Fashion... Well, we just signed a one album deal, but are

considering signing for two more. No Fashion stands and backs up for all costs such as the studio time, pressing, promotion, etc."

Were there many labels interested in Katatonia? What is your favourite label at the moment?

"Oh yes! We've had a lot of labels interested in us before we decided to sign for No Fashion. No Fashion is totally 100% a label which suits us perfectly. I don't have any fave labels, no."

What language are the lyrics in and what do they deal with?

"So far they've been in English, but we'll

"We want to spread as much sorrow and depression as possible, and to pervert souls to join our musical funeral"

do some Swedish lyrics on our next album. They reflect views about depressive themes and shiver of cold black grief. That's what they're all about in general, even though some lyrics are specified into a certain tale or story."

Can you translate "Jhva Elohim Meth" for me please?

"God is Dead..."

Do you use corpsepaint? If so, why and do you dress in the black metal way?

"Of course we wear corpsepaint, we're completely into it and it brings that Northern warrior kind of mood, true worship of death. We're mostly dressed in the black metal way, even though I'm more into strange outfits."

What do you think of your country's scene? Which are your favourite Swedish bands and which country has the best scene?

"Sweden has a huge scene with a lot of crap and too many clones. The bands I prefer from here are Bathory, Opeth, Dissection, Eucharist, Ancient, Nocturnal Rites, Throne Of Azah, Marduk, Ophthalamia, Unanimated and probably some more. The best scene? Well, perhaps the UK or Norway..."

Do you play live? What sort of people turn up at your gigs and do they slam, stagedive, etc.?

"We've only played one gig so far, so I can't tell you much about it. But for sure I'd hate it if people started stagediving while we were playing. There are always trendy people at every fucking gig, it's unavoidable. We want it very dark on stage, maybe with some gloomy blue light as well. We'll see what we can come up with when the time comes..."

Are you involved with the True Satanists Horde? What is your opinion on Satanism and religion?

"No, I'm not involved in any particular horde or organisation. Satanism in itself is a pure respectable form, but it's too badly infected with fools, it's a trend unfortunately. I'm only into northern mythology as a religion, the rest are crap, crush!"

Do you know Angraminyo of Azhubham Haani? I heard he was meant to be in prison or something!

"Yes, I know him. According to him, he was going to prison, but I don't know whether he's gone there, escaped or anything..."

We have reached the end... Do you have any last words?

"All blackened souls, buy our LP/CD! On the ship Naglfar we sail, but we change course... Dod over de vita horder!"

Blackheim, Nystrom, Grystigen 28, 147 52 Tumba, Sweden.



Beer, Goats and Rock'n'roll

An acquired taste are Finland's leading black & rollers Impaled Nazarene. They are seen as slightly less serious than most and therefore "untrue" by the immoral majority of Satan's children, but I like them. Their older songs especially kick ass as only Finns can, so it is a bit of a treat for me to present to you this interview which Ross conducted a short while after the "Sadogoot" EP was released...

Is the "Sadogoot" EP a fair indication of what your new material sounds like?

"I guess so, "Sadogoot" was the last one we finished before entering Tico Tico Studios. "Ghost Riders" is a cover of Tom Jones, so it ain't our own but I just think we really made that song work."

What is going on between you and Norway, as on your CD it says "No orders from Norway accepted!!". Do you like any Norwegian bands?

"Rational thinking: Because we are so false, I don't want any Norwegians thinking that we might be true, so that's why we don't sell them any. We're doing them a favour. Mayhem is a great band."

Is your vocal style influenced by ENT perhaps?

"I have never thought about this. I don't know, but ENT belongs absolutely to my fave bands and we still play their "Conned Thru Life" as a cover live, but I hate their lyrics."

What do you think of the churches in Norway?

"Not a single thing."

What does "Tol Cornt Norz Norz Norz" mean?

"Learn Enochian and find out."

Why are you still selling your demo so long after its release?

"Because it's the only way to finance the other mail, interviews and stuff. One IRC means shit in our postal system."

Do you ever go into the woods?

"When it's autumn, yes."

Who did the effects on the LP?

"All vocal effects by me and all the rest of the shit is done by Kimmo. Naturally, the man behind the desk did the "real" job."

I read somewhere that your favourite band was Venom. Who else do you like?

"I don't exactly have fave bands, but Venom is definitely the only band which made me interested in music. I listen much more to Industrial than black/death metal, bands like Laibach, NIN, Ministry, Lard, Optimum Wound Profile, etc. are much more brutal than any of the R/C bands. Also I listen to Wagner a lot, he was a genius. Listen to Wagner and read Nietzsche and you are above!"

Last words?

"I would like to say great thanks to Gill and Nigel Adamson from Hastings, I miss you a lot. XXX is the only way!"

Impaled Nazarene c/o Osmose, BP 57, 62990 Beaurainville, France.



After three LPs and two European tours, I think it's safe to say that Marduk are the most well known black metal band to have emerged from Sweden since you-know-who, not to mention one of the best. Their no-bullshit (Black) Metal Up Your Ass approach to songwriting and delivery is admirable, considering the temptations of today's synth technology, and subtlety is not one of their strong points. No bad thing, if you ask me. To top it all off, they frequently hark back to the golden age of German thrash and are thus - in theory anyway - my idea of what modern black metal should be all about, i.e. violence, hatred, darkness and leather...

I interviewed the all-new vocalist Legion circa six months after the band's third vinyl offering "Opus Nocturne" was unleashed and would like to thank my friend Martin Kelso for supplying me with a few of the questions.

Read on, Sons (and Daughters) of Northern Darkness, and remember: Those of the Unlight have probably forgotten to put money in the electricity meter again...

Hello. How is the weather in Sweden and how does it feel to be answering an interview all the way from Bonnie Scotland?

"Greetings Gregory. The weather in Sweden could not be much better, considering it's summer. An ice cold rain has just stopped falling and the sky is filled with black clouds which hide the sun. The air is moist and as I write now the darkness falls and the fog comes drifting. A weather which gets me in the mood. I do not really care where interviews come from as long as they are of quality. I do not know very much about Scotland, but a friend of mine was there last summer and he saw some old castles which he took some pictures of and they were truly majestic. I think this is the first interview from Scotland that I have ever answered."

Cool. "Opus Nocturne" is, in a word (well, two actually), fucking intense. Is there anything, do you think, in Sweden to match it?

"I agree with your opinions about "Opus Nocturne". I was not present in the line-up when the songs were written, but I once discussed the forthcoming Marduk songs with Evil in the summer of 1993 and he told me that they were going to make some of the most violent and intense music ever heard. I do not think that there is another Swedish album which matches the brutality and violence which Marduk put into their "Opus..." album because the trend here is to play melodic tunes and other crap instead of being violent. I do not really understand how these bands are thinking when they mix the darkest of lyrics with music that is full of joy and sweet harmony. It sounds more like gospel than evil music!"

Was it difficult to achieve such a raw, brutal and angry sound in a top class studio

like Unisound? I thought you weren't going to record there again after "Those of the Unlight" anyway...

"Marduk is never going to record anything within the realms of Unisound Studios again. Dan Swano made a lot of mistakes on the "Opus..." album and he has said to others that we are nothing but idiots, so he can go to hell; we do not give a fuck about him or his studio anymore! The angrier sound you are talking about is just progression in our eyes. A pretty big one if you compare it with "Those of the Unlight", which also had something to do with the fact that the line-up was more satisfying when they recorded "Opus...". The days I was visiting them in the studio the whole place was boiling with seething evil and the chaos was really there.

"Marduk was allowed to plunge further into violence thanks to our present drummer Fredrik Andersson, who is like a raging demon behind the drums. Also, some other feeble personalities were present in the band at an earlier stage which Evil so cleverly got rid of. The only disappointment with "Opus..." in my opinion is that Dan wasn't competent enough to bring forth B. War's

bass, as his bass playing is so much more complicated than what it sounds on the album. Jocke Grave had wimped out a whole lot from what he originally was and became nothing more than a pathetic coward, and the combination of his cowardice and Dan's incompetence became a disaster for the vocals on the album. But I guess you could see "Opus Nocturne" as some sort of an end of the beginning, 'cause the line-up of Marduk is now filled with competent and malicious personalities who will create utter violence on the next album."

Tell us about your song writing process. Does everyone contribute ideas or is it Evil who is mainly responsible?

"When it comes to Marduk we are all very serious and as soon as anyone has got an idea which is suitable for the band it is used. Evil is the one that makes most of the music; he always manages to come up with brilliant riffs and ideas. The only thing I have participated in so far is two lyrics, but I will surely do more before we are done with our fourth creation. When we rehearse the ideas come into reality when everyone is doing their part and the idea becomes music."

So it was Evil who wrote the masterly "On Darkened Wings" and "Wolves" then? Which are your favourite songs, both by Marduk and in general?

"Yes, they are both creations of the Marduk mastermind Evil, and as far as I am concerned they are unbelievably great. They are two very special songs to me. I remember how when I first got the advance tape of "Those..." I took my car out on the small roads in the forests around here listening to those songs over and over again. Most of the Marduk riffs are just ideas which grow into something when we rehearse."

"I have got several Marduk favourites which are very special to me and I go crazy and enter another state of mind when we rehearse them. I am very fond of "Sulphur Souls", "Wolves pt. II", "On Darkened Wings", "Wolves", "When the Sky Turns Black as the Night" and "The Black". Another band that I never get tired of is Mayhem. Everything they have done is supreme art, and ever since I got the advance for "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas" I have listened to it almost every day."

Why did you decide to remake "Wolves"? I suppose it has something to do with the immense central riff. If it does then why not grace us with "On Darkened Wings pt. II"?

"The central riff in "Wolves" is for sure a mighty one. I am very fond of these two tracks and I know that Evil adores them. I think the follow-up to "Wolves" came out really well as a more chaotic and fast piece about the black beasts in the Carpathians. Wolves are about the most interesting of all animals and those songs have a very special atmosphere, so it was more than just the central riff that was behind the decision of a follow-up. We will include a third song about the Carpathian wolves on our next album. An "On Darkened Wings" follow-up is not actual at this point in time, we haven't discussed the matter at all. But I never say never, time will tell."

You seems to have put a lot of effort into the packaging of "Opus Nocturne", what with the band portraits, etc. Is this something that is very important to you? What about when you were younger?

"I think the packaging makes a difference for the overall feeling of the album. When I was younger I bought records that I had heard something from or someone had said were cruel, but of course it was fucking cool if the album cover and the booklet was raw and attractive. So, the album cover and booklet does make a difference, I would say."

Why are the only lyrics printed in the "Opus..." booklet those of the title track? Was it perhaps another design fuck-up like the "evil" pink eyes and logo on the original pressing of your last album? How badly did Osmose screw up this time round? I read in Slayer #10 that you had planned to print all of your lyrics in some sort of special booklet; is this still the case?

"The reason that the only lyrics that are printed on "Opus Nocturne" were those of the title track (it's a hymn to the night) is because of the fact that they are not very blasphemous. In this stinking world controlled by Christians you can't open your mouth without being boycotted as a fascist or whatever because all the fucking humanitarian peace and love activists are scared to death by the ghosts of the second world war and all that the Antichrist did.



Marduk, October '94: Lay down your soul to the gods rock and roll... and spandex (check out Fredrik's cool trousers, second from the left)



"You lookin' at me?"

Since our lyrics worship hate, war, violence, darkness and evil and not just how wonderful the forest and all the stupid animals are, or deal with some fucking melancholic souls lost forever, we run into a great deal of problems every time we expose our death and devil worshipping. It will just be best for everyone if the lyrics lie hidden within the music. There have been some printing problems which stopped it from happening this time too, but as you mentioned, there are plans to release all the lyrics in a compendium or something. We will see. The only fault with "Opus..." was that one of the 'ands' in the lyric turned out 'ans'; nothing big really. Recording the "Those..." cover, I can tell you that there now exists a remake of that album..."

So, what are your lyrics about in general? I take it that they're a touch more extreme than the average "icy northern winds" stuff.

"As I mentioned, we do not deal with those frosty forest melancholic bullshit lyrics, but more advanced supreme lyrics that deal with the subjects of black metal and nothing else. We do not have to scream "Satan" sixteen times in a row (like Dark Funeral, ha ha - Ed) to express our supreme dedication to the dark master. I will not compare our lyrics any more with those of the bands of today since I hardly read any of them. I have three favourite writers and they are Dead (RIP) of Mayhem, who really was onto something with his totally raw and primitive style. Fenriz of Darkthrone is also a great poet, I just love his lyrics. I also think It of Abruption is a genius."

Gigs now, and unlike the large majority of your contemporaries you actually bother with them. Many modern day misanthropes claim that the reason for their cowardly... sorry, wise silence on the live front is the fact that they would be unable to represent their true sound live. Does this mean that the music of Marduk is perfectly suited to the live environment? Which dates were the best from the Sons of Northern Darkness and Winter War tours and did you find these treks beneficial for song writing purposes? Do you, for example, write with gigs in mind nowadays?

"Which gigs et cetera were the best is impossible for me to say as I didn't participate in either of the tours that Marduk has done. Marduk is the perfect instrument to

spread damnation as we represent evil and nothing else. In other words, pure fucking black metal. Other bands that wish not to play live can have it that way, but if they can't recreate their sound on stage how can they create something in a studio without "cheating" with a lot of technical equipment? I do not know if Marduk will write even better songs because we have been out on tour, but it is a great thing to poison the air with black streams of hate."

I see Osmose has pressed "Fuck Me Jesus" onto a CD. Can I take it from this that you are still satisfied with your 1991 tape?

"The reason for putting out "Fuck..." again was due to the tremendous demand for it. When I first bought the tape back in '91 I thought it was fucking raw and brutal and I still think it is a masterpiece. I know that the rest of the band is also very proud of it."

How well have you gone down with the Christian community over in Sweden and how do you tend to deal with the "problems" they create? Is violence, do you think, the key? Personally, I think that just draws unnecessary attention, you know?

"The Christians are just feeble-minded idiots who do not dare to stand in our way. If there should occur a greater problem which we cannot handle there is always help to be got from other locations in Sweden, and since the Horde is like an anonymous Mafia they will never have a clue who has done what and that will frighten them enough to leave us alone. We are far too brutal to be stopped by Christians physically and some fucking notes I will not care about as they do not scare me at all. Anyway, I will do something much worse in return. What shall they do, the poor servants of goodness; murder me? What good Christian will end up in heaven after having

committed such a horrifying crime?"

Your opinions, please, on the state of the Swedish scene today.

"I do not care too much about the Swedish scene these days. It is just puking out a lot of bands every day, and all these bands are screaming about how early they were into black metal. I will just hail the bands connected with the Horde as kings of Sweden, and they are Abruption, Marduk, Ophthalamia and Dissection. I also enjoy Dark Funeral. They are the only new band that have accomplished something of value."

What about the British scene then? Do you like Cradle Of Filth, for example, or is it just the old gods like Motorhead, Venom, Maiden, etc.?

"The modern British scene has not produced anything other than pure garbage, and Cradle Of Filth suck! They are a big fucking hype and I hate their worthless music! (Yes! Nice one, Legion - Ed) Yes, the only thing worth mentioning with the UK is the old gods you just spoke of!"

Are you into anything apart from black metal? Death metal or old thrash perhaps... I've seen your shirts in At The Gates videos; is the respect mutual?

"I have always been into metal since the age of 7, so there are a lot of bands that I have grown up with that I still like. I also like synth music like Vangelis and Tangerine Dream, some classical music and some soundtracks (Now there's a surprise! - Ed). At The Gates is not my bag really except for the "Gardens of Grief" mini-LP. I think their music is too complex and boring."

When you first picked up an instrument did you ever hope or expect to come this far? Any regrets?

"I had my first band when I was twelve, influenced by Manowar, Iron Maiden and Dio. I never really wondered what the future would bring. I do not have any particular regrets with the things I have done in my life."

Future plans for the band? How's about a nice tour of Britain, or more specifically Scotland, with Dissection?

"We will begin to record our next album at the end of the year, then we will tour and spread damnation once again. A tour in Britain is not impossible, but nothing is certain yet. We are now just concentrating on our next album, which will be a fast, violent and atmospheric hellish inferno!"

So, we have reached the end of this interview. Cheers for your time, and all that... Is there anything you'd like to add?

"Thanks for the interview! I think it was very interesting due to the lack of standard and low quality questions, with lots of deepened and thinking parts. One of the best I've done so far for Marduk."

"Always walk in the horned shadow and stay true to darkness. The reward will be enormous... Hail Satan!"

Marduk, Box 609, 60114 Norrköping, Sweden.



Here's a nice Cryptopsy interview kindly passed on by my good friend Bill, who *unkindly* put his fanzine Anatomia to sleep before its fourth and best issue was released. After hearing Cryptopsy's crazy debut, "Blasphemy Made Flesh", I was seriously contemplating doing them myself, but you know how it is... Preach on, brother Bill!

You may recall me giving Cryptopsy's one and only demo, "Ungentle Exhumation", a mention way back in issue #1. Then again, you may not. When I was but a youngster without a care in the world I often used to spend my time fishing. And, well, my pal once caught a fish and 'put it to sleep' by hurling it at a brick wall and then stamping on its pulverised remains, a horrifically brutal method of death second only to continued exposure to the said cassette - at unholy volumes, naturally - and the noxious fumes which emanate from the cracks simultaneously opening in your speakers. Billleeeaaarrggghhh, and all that jazz.

Speed, brutality and total fucking insanity... what's the appeal, mate?

"It's what death metal is supposed to be all about, right? I think it's important for us that when people mention the name Cryptopsy people all pretty much reply the same thing - speed, brutality, insanity, or anything along those lines. It's a jaded little population that's seen and heard pretty much everything, so I think if you invoke the turn of a head and somebody can say "Wow! Check that CD out!", you've really managed to accomplish something. From what we've seen, read and heard, I guess we've managed to do that. It's great! I didn't expect the response to our CD would be that great, but apparently it is, so I think we've surpassed our expectations with it."

Your "Blasphemy Made Flesh" debut certainly overflowed with these qualities... was it your intention to try and make one of the most brutally extreme albums in death metal history? If it was, I'm sure you've succeeded!

"No. I don't think a musician or, by extension, a group should go about recording material with the sole intention of being the sickest, the heaviest or the fastest. It's detrimental to the writing process I think, because you become too concerned with satisfying one or two particular aspects of your music and neglect other important elements that make up a good song and more importantly a good album. Sure, we wanted it to be extreme and very fast, but we also wanted to write catchy, memorable songs. Who cares if you're the fastest band on the planet? If your songs aren't good people aren't gonna pay much attention to it anyway, if at all. It was never our intention to go out and create the fastest album in history, but if some people look at "Blasphemy Made Flesh" that way then that to me means it was a success



because it's an album that others are judged by - not vice versa."

How will you follow the album up, then? It would be impossible to imagine you getting faster and more brutal with each release. I mean, there is a limit, isn't there? Haven't you already reached it?

"We've finished writing our second album and will be recording it in mid December. It is faster, more aggressive and more brutal than "Blasphemy Made Flesh". We don't want to set limits. We can't. We knew we had to write stuff for this album that would be in the same vein as the first and that the grinds would be the first thing people would pay attention to. It's faster, sure, but it's natural. You strive to get better all the time, and I think we have. We were more concerned in better structuring of the songs, better phrasing for the vocal patterns, and overall more mature musicianship, all the while keeping with what Cryptopsy is all about. It is considerably faster, which is a bonus but was never a priority."

A lot of people feel that the ultimate in fast, technical and brutal death metal was reached back in 1991 when Suffocation released "Effigy of the Forgotten". I mean, it's fucking unsurpassable, isn't it?

"That's a perfect example of an album by which others were judged. That album is an absolute classic. It really rewrote the death metal scene and the music that came out after. I'd have to agree that it probably is unsurpassable. It'll probably forever be considered by most to be a top 5 death classic of all time, and rightly so."

Are you, as a band, content to stick to what are already well-trodden paths? It's all been done before, or has it? What do Cryptopsy add to the style, if anything at all? Is doing something fresh and new something that you're interested in?

"Absolutely. You have to try new things all the time or you become stale and easily forgotten. We don't want to follow trends. Wherever and whenever possible, you want to try and create new ones. We didn't want to write a second "Blasphemy...", and I think we didn't. We'll always strive to try something new and a bit different and mould it into what we think Cryptopsy is all about. It is important to take a little new things and incorporate them into your basic framework. You don't want to lose track of who you are and give your music a complete facelift. Keep the same foundation and build from there."

It seems like the Canadian underground

scene has really sprung to life these past few years. What do you think has been the stimulus for that? Which bands lead the scene nowadays?

"I'm not sure what the sudden surge is attributed to. There certainly are a lot of bands and a lot of good ones, too. I think Gorguts really gave the Canadian scene, in particular the Quebec scene, a good push. Kataklysm have risen to international status and that has also been great for our scene. We are hoping to be next in line to take that step."

Death metal in general seems to be getting quite strong once again, with a smaller but more dedicated following than some years ago. Do you

think the scene is better now than it was at the height of the death metal trend in 1991/1992?

"You're absolutely right. It is a smaller but more united, more dedicated scene. That's the thing with trends. In the end, the true are still there while the rest just get weeded out. For that reason, I think it makes for a much healthier scene. Sure, it would always be nice to double your crowds at shows, double your sales, etc., but you sacrifice the sincerity and dedication, something I consider to be very important in this genre. If it gets bigger, I want it to be for the right reasons, not because "It's cool to listen to Cryptopsy because they're so fast". If that's their reason for listening to us, they've missed the boat."

So have you got any plans to tour, then? Is Cryptopsy ready to face the arduous task that is a rock'n'roll on-the-road lifestyle? Do you find it hard to concentrate on playing when you look at your groupies and find that actually you have none? Heh heh!

"We've already toured. Twice. The first was a mini-tour with Suffocation when the album was first released in May '94. We completed the first official, big headlining tour in June-July '95. We toured all of Canada. In all we did 14 shows coast-to-coast and the response was simply phenomenal. It was well worth it. It is an arduous task, I agree, but the rewards really make it all worthwhile. We have not toured in the US yet, but we do have a 35-date North American tour in the works for our new album and we are working on a 20-date tour of Europe for May '96. As far as groupies go, well... maybe it's best not to say anything at all."

Actually, a lot of fast bands' music seems to suffer in a live environment, losing a lot of its clarity and sounding like a wall of noise. How does the insanely fast Cryptopsy go down live?

"We're a lot more energetic and a bit faster. I think we are a better live outfit than studio. You cannot reproduce the aggression of a live show on CD, and with Lord Worm coming on stage in his coffin and covered in worms, it gives people a little something extra to talk about. You're right about sound, though. Due to a lack of budget we



"Who cares if you're the fastest band on the planet? If your songs aren't good people aren't gonna pay much attention to it anyway, if at all."

couldn't afford to take a sound-man with us, so you're never quite sure what you're gonna sound like on any particular night. For the most part it hasn't been a problem for us, but for Europe we are definitely taking a sound-man with us who knows our stuff well. It's important to be consistent every night, and I want the fans to enjoy it. There's nothing worse than seeing a band you like when the sound sucks."

I honestly think Cryptopsy is one of the fastest death metal bands I've ever heard. What is it that entices you to play at this sort of speed? Do you get much inspiration from old grind stuff like Terrorizer and Napalm?

"We based our concept of Cryptopsy back in '92 around the styles of bands like Napalm, Carcass, Terrorizer and Morbid Angel but we never set out to be like any of them and we certainly don't sound like any of them. It's strange, though, 'cause none of us really listen to death metal anymore. It sounds a bit pretentious, but what can you honestly expect to achieve for yourself as a band if you rely on other bands to inspire you? The music we listen to is polar opposites to what we play. Bands/performers like Bjork, Dead Can Dance, Yngwie Malmsteen, Dream Theater are among our favourites. It's not that we don't listen to death, we all do, it's just that we don't only listen to it or rely on it for inspiration."

How long have you been involved in the scene? Do you still share as much enthusiasm for it as when you started?

"Much, much more. I've been in it for eight years and actively for about half of that, but now I have far more enthusiasm for it because I'm seeing good results coming out of our investments and hard work."

A lot of death metal lyrics are criticised for their shallowness. What sort of subjects do Cryptopsy cover, and how much importance do you place on them in general?

"For the most part, Lord Worm deals with subjects and concepts that everyone else has, but his approach is a bit different. Instead of being a blatant, in-your-face gorehound, he's a lot more discreet in how he presents his ideas. The meaning is a little more hidden but it leaves you with the feeling like *he is talking about what I think he is? Oh Christ, that's pretty sick*. I've always liked that about his style, 'cause it's unique and it's pretty well thought out and presented. He might have gone too far on our new album, though. You guys be the judge when you get it."

Okay, I'll bet you wimps in Canada and the US of A are totally jealous of the extremely brutal and fast European death metal scene, right? No, seriously, what do you think of the European scene?

"I think the European scene completely rules! There are so many wicked bands in Europe it's unbelievable! I'm really into the doom/atmospheric stuff like Celestial Season, The Gathering, Amorphis and My Dying Bride. We're all big fans of Edge of Sanity and of course Cradle of Filth. We're so anxious to head out there, meet the bands, the people, etc. It'll completely kill! I guess in the meantime, check out our album "None So Vile" out in February '96 on Wrong Again Records of Sweden. Thanx a million to you, Bill, for the killer interview and great questions! People, contact us for more info! Goriest wishes to all."

Cryptopsy c/o Steve Thibault, 1469 Ducas, Lasalle, Quebec H8N 1A5, Canada.



Mindrot are an American band that are not only bearable but - inconceivably - rather brilliant. I never really paid them much attention in their demo days (probably a wise decision, listening back). Their debut CD, however - the Relapse-released "Dawning" - signifies the beginning (or dawning, if you like) of a hopefully fruitful career as grown-up recording artists. They've already established themselves in their homeland, and with any amount of luck Nuclear Blast will ensure a bright future for them on this side of the Atlantic too, as they certainly deserve it.

What they play is - to be as succinct as possible - gothic doom/grind, a combination that works far better on record than it does on paper. Massive walls of guitars, almighty vocal roars and thundering drumbeats are complimented and contrasted by intensely atmospheric synths and agonised moans, achieving the effect, according to the Relapse info sheet, of "...a tortured soul being blessed with beauty and finesse, only to be raped by today's harsh realities". Quite.

Anyway, I was slightly disappointed to discover that the band have significantly less to say for themselves than their music when I interviewed lead guitarist Dan Kaufman, but that's Americans for you... Hopefully the relative brevity of this interview won't put you off hearing the album, as it really is something special.

Hello Dan. I don't think I'd be overexaggerating in saying that "Dawning" was one of 1995's heaviest albums. Are you pleased with it?

"The album sounds as good as it could with the gear and money we had to record it with. I think if we could record it now it would even be better. Perhaps even more atmospheric and more powerful."

You're being marketed as the heralds of a new era in extreme metal. Do you feel obliged to live up to this?

"No, not really. We're obliged to live up to our own standards, which I do believe are a lot higher than anyone else's standards who isn't in the band."

Was it a conscious decision to walk your own way, given the overall shittiness of the American scene, or did it just sort of... happen?

"We never really cared what most bands were doing at the time we started out. We just wanted to play music we would like listening to if we weren't in the band. I would say it was an equal amount of both."

You haven't always sounded the way you do, however. Is there anything you can think of that might have nudged you in the direction of where you're at today? Incidentally, I'm having difficulties trying to come up with a satisfactory definition of your sound. Fancy helping me out?

"We were always going in the direction we've been going. I'm sure it's hard to imagine that, but there were a lot of songs in between the recordings that never made it to see the light of day. I myself am super-critical

of my songwriting. I have personally thrown out at least five or six songs that I didn't feel good playing. As for defining our sound, I'd just call it Mindrot. We're constantly changing and giving us one of those drab labellings like gothic-doom-death makes us change even more. We don't want to be pinned down with some sort of sound everyone else wants to play."

The way I see it, "Dawning" is some sort of an invitation for people to wake up and see they're being fucked with. A fair observation, do you think?

"I guess so. It's really more personal than that, though. Each song is based off of personal experiences from each person. We don't have a big message in any of our songs that we want people to follow or to think about. We just write about our own problems we live with everyday."

What are Mindrot's current influences and inspirations?

"Do you mean bands that I'm listening to now? I've been listening to the Deftones album a lot. Along with the Struggle LP. But bands that have influenced us range from the likes of Black Sabbath to the Nephilim to the Amebix."

California is always seen as a sunny, carefree sex haven, yet your music is incredibly dark, cold and angst-ridden. I presume, then, that you seek inspiration in the darker side of human nature. Correct?

"Well I'd hate to rain on your parade, but California ain't as carefree as you are led to believe. Where I live there is a lot of gang violence going on. If you don't hear a drive-by shooting at least three times a week in the neighbourhoods around me, something is incredibly wrong. There are a lot of fucked up people living here and they don't make life any easier. So our influence is all around us."

Am I right in thinking that you prefer European acts to your fellow countrymen? Jeff from Relapse compared you to Anathema in one of his letters. Do you agree?

"We prefer good bands than any other. It doesn't matter to me where they're from. I dig a lot of American bands right now like Drive Like Jehu and Today is the Day. I myself have only heard Anathema once, maybe twice, so far, so I couldn't tell you if that's a good comparison."

Have you any idea how the European response has been to your CDs? You're pretty unheard of over here, unfortunately. Any intentions of coming over to play? Who would your ideal touring partners be?

"I have absolutely no clue on how the CDs are doing in Europe. I've only seen a lot of reviews from different 'zines and they all have been good. So if that's an indicator things must be good. We're aiming for people who'll dig our music. If that happens to be Europe then cool 'cause I'd love to go there. There have been talks of going to Europe but nothing definite as yet. I wouldn't mind touring with Paradise Lost or Spinewrench or even ABC Diablo. That would rule!"

Atmosphere plays a major role in your sound these days, or at least on record it does. Are you able to reproduce everything live? If not, was it a worthy sacrifice?

"We're working on it. We have this keyboard/sampler that we play our samples through and our keyboard parts are sequenced. We also have the ocean sounds and the rain. We're just working out the bugs."

Yes or no: emotionless music = worthless music.

"Of course. Music must do something to the listener. That is all that our music is to us. Pure emotion."

Unless I'm very much mistaken, Agent Fox Mulder of the X-Files appears in your intro. Are you heavily into the show and the questions it raises? Which is your favourite government conspiracy theory?

"Well you are mistaken (hee hee). It's from this movie The Rapture which has the guy from the X-Files. It's about how religion can really mess you up if you get too fanatical. You should check it out. I personally don't watch that much TV because it's very hypnotic and brainwashing. As for conspiracies, I don't have too many. Just UFOs. The reason the government doesn't tell you about them is it'll cause too much chaos. People's beliefs in God would be thrown out of the window because man is supposed to be made in the image of God and the aliens should be made in his image too. But aliens don't look like humans. How could God create them as they are if we are made in his image? This probably doesn't make much sense 'cause it's hard for me to type all my thoughts out."

Do you feel any bitterness towards Fear Factory who, despite being a younger band than yourselves and coming from roughly the same background, have made it? What do you think of "Demanufacture"?

"I don't feel bitter at all. They have busted their balls to get to where they are at. "Demanufacture" is an all right album."

Are there any keen net-surfers in the band? If there are, please shoot them for me. Only kidding...

"John and Adrian are just beginning. I've been pondering doing it for a while now. Just haven't gotten off my lazy ass to get on."

Can you give us a rough idea of where you're heading musically? Is the new stuff moodier or more pissed off sounding?

"Both. The pissed off songs will make you want to kick someone's ass, the gothic doomy stuff will make you feel incredibly miserable."

Last words?

"Thanks a lot. Take care of yourself. Just pick up the CD of you dig anything you've heard here or elsewhere. I'm sure you won't be disappointed. Peace."

Mindrot c/o Relapse Records, PO Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551, USA.

Fleurety

tempus fugit

"Shite", "bollocks" and "fucking terrible" are just some of the phrases I have heard describing the early works of Fleurety. It appears that most people find it hard to see the appeal of their "Black Snow" demo or the "Darker Shade of Evil" EP that followed, but personally I adored - and still adore - both of them. Then again, I'm not most people... Indeed, such was my excitement when I received an advance copy of their track for Plastic Head's (awful) "Blackened" compilation that I immediately wrote to Svein Egil Hatlevik (drums, synths and vocals) with some soul-searching queries.

Heilsa Svein! What are you listening to? How's the weather and what do you have planned for the rest of the week?

"Guten Abend. Right now, my chamber is filled with the music of the Japanese Nijiumu. Totally unearthly music; one of my definite favourite releases is their "Era of Sad Winds" CD."

"The weather? Sorry, I am not particularly interested in meteorology. During the time which is left of this week, I hope to be able to answer some interviews, to read some bizarre literature, relax and a lot of tedious things which existence involves."

I've just thought of something: not a terrible amount of people will know what you sound like. Please enlighten them.

"To define is to limit, I do not wish to limit our music. Besides, I would not be satisfied with any description of our music anyway, so why make myself dissatisfied? Moreover, I see the music from the inside, whereas you see it from the outside, and we do not

necessarily see the same qualities, defects and details."

What have you been doing since the completion of the "Absence" compilation track? Writing/recording the LP, I suppose. Can you describe your new material to those who have yet to hear it? Is it, do you think, a continuation of what you were doing with "Absence"?

"Since the recording of "Absence", we have recorded our debut album, "Min Tid Skal Komme"; the material on which was completed in September 1994, after having worked on it since June 1993. The music on the album is closer to "Absence" than to the precedent releases, but it would be erroneous to say that it is a continuation of this song. A lot of elements on the album cannot be heard in "Absence" and vice versa. "Absence" was composed in August 1994, but was recorded before the album, so it is difficult to decide which comes before the other."

After the 7" you did for Aesthetic Death you underwent a pretty drastic stylistic change. What brought this on and how have people reacted to it so far?

"In my opinion, one of the cardinal objects of Fleurety is to avoid stagnancy, both artistic and personal. I hope that if I/we should stop developing, someone will be sensible enough to end it. The change is merely a consequence of our development; the music changes as our musical experience and knowledge increase. Still, I think that the genuine Fleurety feeling is still there, something which is very important. Most people seem to be enamoured of our more



Svein-Egil Hatlevik

recent recordings, and many who did not enjoy the older ones have spoken in praising terms about it."

Would you agree that you have become a little more accessible now that Alex has dropped his subhuman "birdcry" in favour of a more measured, rasping approach? Was this because the screams were killing his throat?

"Those screams, which you very incorrectly call subhuman, did in fact kill Alexander's throat, and the rasping technique you refer to is mine. The old vocal style fitted the old material very well, giving it an exquisitely hideous touch, but the newer material demanded not only different, but more varied vocals."

"Yes, I would agree that our style has become more accessible, or more commonly digestible, as I like to put it. This is, however, something not considered in the creative process; whether people like our music or not is completely insignificant, I just want the music to be Fleurety, all other concerns are inferior to this. But I assume that our future material will be too hectic for many of those who buy our albums, with very much happening. Now, let me finish this answer by adding that genre and style are just illusions, the importance is in the expression and the emotion of the music. These are universal, regardless of stylistic labels and artificial obstacles."

Personally I adored your old style and found both the demo and the 7" very vast and desolate sounding. Was this the desired effect and if so, how did you go about writing such material? Did/do you go into the forest for inspiration?

"Are you insinuating that the atmosphere in those recordings was coincidental? (No - Ed) Of course it was incidental. I do not believe in coincidence anyway, just skill and lack of skill. I cannot really recollect how we went about writing that material, but it would be natural to imagine that music of different kinds provided crucial influences, as did literature. Personally, I would not say that the forest inspires me that much. Perchance it had greater impact on me earlier, but I today feel that other things inspire me far more."

"My imagination has changed somewhat, too. I seem to be unable to experience the forest as the mystical place it once used to be. Where I once

saw how trolls, elves and similar creatures would emerge from their subterranean dwellings, I now see boring botanical and zoological organisms."

Maybe you just aren't picking the right mushrooms these days...

How do you feel about Fleurety in the live environment? Is black metal a live thing anyway, do you think?

"My relationship to live performances is ambivalent. On the one hand I do see the necessity and the benefits of giving concerts. It certainly is a good way to promote the band and it adds another dimension to the musical experience. It is also very stimulating for our musical skills to present the music in front of an audience."

"On the other hand, metal audiences disgust me with their mindless shaking of limbs; I certainly hope they will show the calmness of civilised human beings during our concerts and not rave around like epileptics. Furthermore, travelling is exhaustive and live performances are too spontaneous, therefore the artistic quality will decrease."

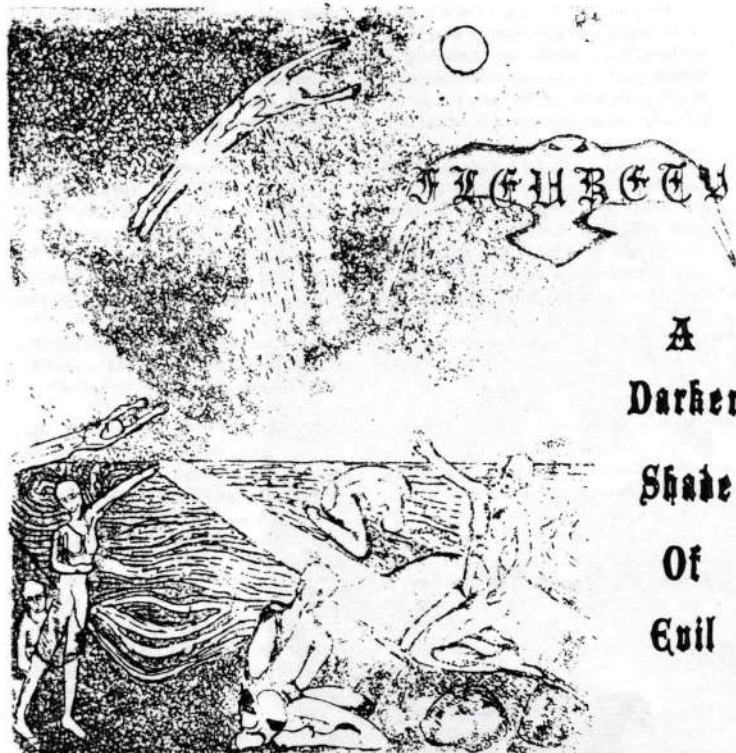
"But our live concept is very interesting. Maybe we will do some touring this year. Look out for Fleurety in Middle Europe or the British Isles."

"Is "black metal" a live thing? I prefer listening to records, but I cannot exclude the possibility of me going to a "black metal" concert."

You sound somewhat distant when you talk about black metal in inverted commas. Does this mean you don't consider yourself a part of the movement? You certainly differ significantly from most bands in the genre both musically and ideologically, but you always seem to get lumped in with them. Do you think the current trend will last for much longer?

"I do not feel any sense of belonging to the "black metal" movement, it used to be important to me to emphasise that, but I do not care much about this any longer. If people wish to define us by any label, that is their business, just do not expect us to live up to your definitions. As I said earlier, to define is to limit, and we are too limited as it is; it is a goal to have as few restrictions as possible. Sometimes our music is described using vague, uninformative and contradictory words that do not really give any associations, but still cannot be denied upon hearing the music, for instance "hideously euphonic metal music".

"What is the current trend? I am not able to keep up with the pace of the trends."



I've heard that you are not accepted by most of the people in your own country, what with the petty threats that Diamanda was getting at the time of your signing. Has there been any follow-up to that rather provocative fax she sent for print in a major Norwegian metal mag?

"Petty is indeed the word for it. However, it seems that this enmity is going to strangle itself, just as I foresaw. There has not been any follow-up to that fax."

The EP cover is marvellous, really weird and original looking. Mysterious too; can you tell us what it signifies? Will you be using PA Oiestad's work again?

"I am not familiar with the artist's original idea or message. I have my own interpretation of it, and the other half of the band has his. It is no desire of mine to make the cover any less mystical to the observer. Furthermore, I do not want to influence anyone's interpretation or experience of the artwork, or any other artwork; they should be given the opportunity to draw their own conclusion."

"I am not certain whether we will use any of PA Oiestad's art again; it is possible, but we have plenty of time to decide that. The cover of our debut album will be a somewhat unusual band photograph, with which I am very content."

How did the split deal with Aesthetic Death and Misanthropy come about? Did you receive (m)any other offers?

"First there was the 7" EP arrangement with Aesthetic Death. The other half of the band received a letter with a request for wholesale prices for the demo. Eventually, a tape with the advance for our 7" was sent, and the response was enthusiastic. A deal became reality. Contemporaneously, I sent some cassettes to Misanthropy and it was suggested that Aesthetic Death and Misanthropy co-release Fleurety albums."

"We were never given that many offers. The 7" EP was originally meant to be released by a German label, but, as I assume the observant readers have perceived, this never happened. Some other labels have expressed their interest, but their names are not interesting."

Are you happy with the work Stu and Diamanda have done for you so far? How do you feel about sharing flyers with Esoteric - does it bother you? They are pretty different...

"The promotion has been irreproachable thus far, but the real test is yet to come."

"No, it does not bother me to share flyers with Esoteric. Not only because I like their exceptionally gloomy and asocial tunes, but also because I think it would be a waste not to utilise both sides of the flyers."

Like death metal, black metal began very primitively at the beginning of this second era, but has become more and more varied over the years, with an increasing number of avant-garde principles and ideals taking over. How do you see the genre progressing from here?

"As I see it, the only development has been in musical and compositional skill. Skill is the only thing which is relevant in this matter, as I think that innovation and "avant-gardism" (disgusting word) are almost non-existent. It is merely a matter of using unusual compositional techniques and drawing inspiration from non-metal music. Those who see anything new in the so-called innovative bands of today have simply not got sufficient musical knowledge."

"If there is any field in which "new" music can be created, I would place my bets on computer made, electronic music. Sooner or later the computers will suppress the inferior human organism."

Do you think there is as much rivalry between bands from Norway and Sweden as there once was between Norway and Finland? Do you like any of the Swedish melodic black/death bands that seem to have taken over of late like Dissection, Marduk, Unanimated, Dawn, etc.?

"Of the bands you mention, I have only heard Dissection (whose 7" EP from 1991 is quite enjoyable, but I did not like their debut album "The Sombrelain") and Marduk (of which I liked their demo and debut album back when they were still fresh. I do not find their more recent endeavours very interesting, the arrangements lack imagination). Other bands from Sweden who I have found pleasure in listening to are Abruptum (or at least their 7" EP "Evil"), Dark Funeral (they do everything really well, but I must admit I have difficulties in respecting the band concept) and At The Gates. And, of course, Bathory, to whom we owe much."

"Much rivalry? Who cares?"

Have you heard and liked many bands from the British isles lately? Primordial are very good, but they're Irish. Alan (Primordial) interviewed you for The Oath didn't he?

"I have heard Cradle Of Filth and Bal-Sagoth. Primordial's demo was good when I first received it; I have not listened to it in about a year and a half, so I am not certain whether I still like it or not."

"It is correct that I was interviewed by Alan for his second issue of The Oath. This interview is starting to get quite old, and I have lost some illusions since then, so some of my answers are no longer valid."

"If people wish to define us by any label, that is their business, just do not expect us to live up to your definitions."

What do you think of when you think of Scotland?

"Kilts, bagpipes, Loch Ness, Glasgow, Edinburgh, The Crypt Fanzine. I would definitely like to know how to play the bagpipe, it has a most fascinating sound."

This is a pretty personal question, I guess, but could you tell us about some of the dreams you've had?

"Sorry, I have made the mistake of telling about my dreams and other equally personal things in other interviews, and I have learned from it. Still, I often write about dreams in my lyrics, but in such a cryptic and incomprehensible manner that I am able to tell, confess all, but reveal absolutely nothing."

All right. That is all I have to ask you for now. How would you like to end this interview?

"Okay, to somehow make up for not telling about my dreams, I can give you a little poetry, in fact a fairly fresh and unpublished Fleurety lyric:

Vortex

The Pain is neverending. All the dreams have been deflowered. The once lethal weapons are corroding quickly. Perfectly circular little men are dancing through the past. The future is being touched by serpent fingers. The stream floats on. Countless choirs cry fadelessly. A puzzle without pieces. The fight is not against time, it is against timelessness. Withering weeds have defeated the malformed lilies. At dawn it all continues anew."

Here's a second interview I did with Svein Egil, circa nine months after the first. The album, "Min Tid Skal Komme", had been out for quite some time, and I was interested to hear what he thought of it, among other things...

Svein Egil, "Min Tid Skal Komme" has been in the proverbial can for well over a year now. Have you had time to sufficiently distance yourself from it to pass judgement? To me it sounds strangely... well, "warm", I suppose. Comment please.

"When listening to "Min Tid Skal Komme" today I feel a strong urge to do it all anew, in a far better and more detailed manner. I do not quite understand what you mean by describing it with the adjective "warm". If you mean that it, compared to our other releases, is quite soothing, melodic and appeals to grandmothers to a greater extent, yes, I agree, it is a bit "warm". Too "warm".

How have people reacted to the record, given the relative unpopularity of your first two releases? Had you anticipated any reaction at all or were you too caught up in the creative process to care?

"The unpopularity of our first releases seems to me to be a result of the "Let-us-hate-Fleurety-trend" which arose, rather than an objective analysis of our music. While composing "Min Tid Skal Komme" our expectations were that people would hate it regardless of the nature of the music."

Speaking of the creative process, how does this work? Are songs written continually or do they just "happen" at sporadic intervals?

the surface of his lyrics. (Maybe I was afraid of what I would find?) The lyrics for "Min Tid Skal Komme" were written some time during spring 1993 and were originally intended to be performed by Alexander."

Do you still intend to perform live? If so, will you be able to tolerate a crowd of idiots just to reach the understanding few?

"I do not know what will happen with Fleurety and concerts. Will people understand it? Who cares?"

Will you alter your songs at all in order for them to work better in the live environment? Being a two-piece, it would presumably be necessary to recruit session musicians. Could you trust your music in the hands of others? On a similar note, do you see it being performed by completely different people like that of the great composers?

"Are you suggesting that we are great composers? (No - Ed) Wagner, Stockhausen, Stravinsky, Ligeti, Bartok and Grieg are examples of great composers. They are in a completely different league than ours. Our songs will of course be suffering from the spontaneity of a concert. I have no problem with trusting our music in the hands of skilled musicians. I often wish that we could hire people to play the music for us, so as to not be restricted by our limited capability."

Describe a physical embodiment of the essence of Fleurety.

"I would like Fleurety to be as labyrinthine as possible, with many hidden passages, traps and dead ends."

Norwegen Ueber Alles seems to be the general consensus at the moment. Comment, if you will, on this new-found love for Norse heritage and nature. Would you ever use Fleurety as a vehicle for your own political views and ideologies?

"Norway is merely another country in this lavatory of a planet. I do not see how this fact can be altered by certain geomorphic phenomena, vegetation or climate. Neither do I understand reactionary attitudes asserted by so many. Not only is it senseless to lose oneself in

the past, it is horrible to realise that the past most likely is unworthy of losing oneself in. There is no way Fleurety can be unaffected by my political views or ideologies."

There seems to have been a gradual slackening of the strangle-hold that is the Black Metal image and lifestyle in your country and an increase in creativity and diversity. What are your thoughts on what I term the Too-Arty-To-Be-Called-Black-Metal League? Do you consider Fleurety a part of any particular scene or movement or are you complete musical misanthropes? Are there any bands you can empathise with?

"If bands are "too arty to be called black metal" it is not because they are part of any league. It is more plausible that they want to create an individual musical expression. I would prefer to be a bit careful with the word "misanthrope", as it seems to have become a prestigious word amongst "black metallers", albeit very few know the meaning of it. I would rather say that I feel alien to the "black metal" scene; I have little in common with those representatives I have met. I feel we have a good relationship with Ved Buens Ende, whose music I like very much."

Finish off by 'selling' the album to our readers in no more than fifty words please.

"Buy our album and listen to it carefully at least ten times, then one will be able to substantiate one's hatred to our music, which I have never heard anybody do yet."

Fleurety c/o SE Hatlevik, Oterv 2, 1914 Ytre Enebakk, Norway.

In this day and age it takes confidence and more than a little charisma to openly cite Cannibal Corpse and Suffocation as influences. Italy's Agonia, I feel, have both. Despite flogging what could be - okay, is - seen as a dead horse by the large majority of clued-up (or should that be stuck up?) scenesters, the Brescia five-piece do what they do and play what they play with a conviction seldom surpassed in the lower regions of Europe. Whilst 1994's "At the Darkest Spawn" demo didn't have particularly much to say for itself, the EP that followed ("Breed") pummelled and bellowed its way to my attention and affection within minutes of becoming one with my deck.

Here's an interview I did with the ever-wordy vocalist and front man Carlo Gervasi a short while after said platter of notalotta splatter was unleashed.

Ciao Carlo, how are things in Brescia? What've you been up to lately and have there been many interesting gigs?

"Hi Greg, here in Brescia things are OK. We are rehearsing a lot in this period as we are completing some new tracks to play at our imminent gigs. Lately I've been to the Tiamat and Sentenced gig. The first have impressed me, Tiamat's vocalist sings excellently, while the latter haven't really aroused me that much (I should certainly hope not! - Ed). Too many Iron Maiden influences, ya know..."

This is an old cliché, but introduce yourself and your band to the Cryptic readership please.

"Of course! Well, Agonia is a 5 piece band, we formed in the warm summer of 1992. We recorded a live demo the next year, while we entered the studio to release our first official demo, "At the Darkest Spawn", in the beginning of '94. At the end of the same year we finally taped the 7" "Breed". We play brutal and sick US-orientated death metal. I'm the esophagus of the band, write all the lyrics and do all the vocal parts of our songs."

Like you say, there are a fair few American elements in your sound, so Cannibal Corpse and Suffocation are obviously major influences. Is this something that has developed only recently or have these bands inspired you from the start?

"We've strengthened both these influences during the years, as our musical tastes became clearer and more distinct. These influences are really marked on our 7", while on the demo we hadn't really decided yet fixed our style. The tracks on "At the Darkest Spawn" don't comply with a definite line. Just the title track is the most indicative of our current style."

You put out a nice EP on Cryptic Soul Productions last year which is arguably your strongest work to date. Would you agree that the Cannibal Corpse element in your sound has become more pronounced? I mean, "Breed" sounds like "Butchered at Birth pt. II!"

"Yep, absolutely. "Breed" is our best release. The recording and production are good and both songs are more complete than our previous tracks. Our song writing has certainly improved. Yeah, that Cannibal

brutale metallo de la morte



corpse touch is more underlined, but I'd like to state that we don't try to sound like that band; we have our own style and sound. Brutal death possesses its limits and it's easy to sound like the big bands, you know."

I presume that's why you've decided not to write about eating dead people and the like then, or is it just personal preference? Am I right in thinking you enjoy the odd metaphor? For someone who sings about, erm, non-gory topics (I don't actually have the foggiest what it is you're on about) your EP cover is pretty bloody, what with all the impaled zombies and what have you...

"No, I don't like splatter lyrics and I'm not minded to write about gore and things like that. My lyrics have a psychological approach and yeah, they always contain a metaphorical meaning."

"The cover is good, but not exactly what we wanted. There wasn't much time to find an artist and we couldn't wait other weeks to have another cover artwork ready, so we

close that drawing. I like it a lot, in any case."

Back to those lyrics of yours then, what are they all about? Do you make them purposefully so esoteric?

"Well, every person could find to them his/her own sense. Yeah, my lyrics are resolutely and intentionally so esoteric and I love to think that they could suggest different kinds of interpretation (or none at all - Ed). "Devoid of Birth" touches on the subject or reincarnation and resurrection under an unusual point of view. It is a sort of journey through the past to try to find our origins..."

Agonia's origins are, of course, in Italy. Is there a lot of support for you there or have most orders for the demo and EP come from abroad? How many copies of each have you sold, by the way?

"We're well known here in our country, even if the crap trend is black metal or atmospheric death. We have a good amount

of mail and most of the attention comes from the USA where we are more appreciated. At present we have sold 850/900 copies of the demo and it is still requested. The 7" is going to be sold out and we hope that Cryptic Soul will repress it."

In Britain people tend to over-support the domestic scene, neglecting bands from elsewhere. Is it the same in Italy or vice-versa? How's the scene in general, band- and 'zine-wise?

"Yeah, people are over-supportive here too, they prefer to stay in touch with their national bands rather than making contacts abroad. Fanzines do the same and they support our scene a great deal, Agonia too!"

"The scene is good and varied with bands that play varied kinds of death and 'zines that follow all the different facets of the genre. There aren't, on the contrary, many places to play or occasions to see bands playing in Italy. Take Cannibal Corpse for example: They even played in Slovenia but didn't play a single gig in Italy! Gig organisations suck terrible! However, I suggest to The Crypt's readers the following Italian acts: Agonia (ha ha), Enthralment (now Corpsegod - Ed), Calvary, Natron, Horrid, Thy Nature, Desecration, Cannibal Corpse and Suffocation (oops!), and some 'zines like Koito, Shockwave and, hem hem Headfucker."

Are you still involved with hem hem Headfucker then? How the hell do find time to do this as well as promote Agonia?

"Now that I'm completely busy and concentrated with the band I'm neglecting my duties with Headfucker. I have a job and I've got to answer mail every night, you know. I can't help Raffaella with the mag anymore, so yeah, it's pretty hard to stay alive! And time, Greg, is too short for what I have to do every day!"

Doesn't producing a 'zine with your girlfriend put a lot of strain on the relationship? How do you finance HF and Agonia? Neither project comes cheap, I imagine...

"No, the 'zine has never caused troubles to our relationship. On the contrary, doing a 'zine together has hardened our relationship further. Now she's my wife and she's almost completely the one and only editor of Headfucker. I confine myself to be a sort of supervisor!"

"I'm not rich. I work 9/10 hours in a factory and I earn enough to be able to print the mag, once a year. Raffaella hasn't a job now, but I'm happy she's unemployed as I love to know she's waiting for me at home."

Issue 2 was excellent! Can you give us some details on your third?

"Well, glad to hear that you liked it so much! Our next issue should be out during spring and summer 'cause we're making great efforts to make it as professional as possible. Our third issue will have circa 70 pages, computer layout and a glossy cover with artwork by Michael Schindler (the artist who did the Cryptopsy, Defleshed, Excrement CD covers and others). We'll feature in-depth interviews with a lot of US/Canadian bands like Scattered Remnants, Torture Krypt,



Well, I think it looks like a football stadium...

Dying Fetus, Internal Bleeding, Adnauseam, Mark Riddick, Cryptopsy, Descendant and lotsa others, for example a four page int with the UK's Esoteric and an int with their label Aesthetic Death. A glossy poster will be included, featuring Torture Krypt and... another band to discover!" (Editor's note: The mag has probably sold out now, but try a distro or a friend...)

Do you have any tips for all the budding 'zine editors and/or brutal death metal bands out there? You seem to have been highly successful in both ventures so far, so you must be doing something right!

"I'm glad you think both the band and 'zine are successful. This is the best compliment I've got by far! You just have to be honest and unpretentious and put all your passion and effort into what you are doing. This is what we have done. Judging by this interview, you're on the right way Greg! Ha!"

So, what does your average (or not-so-average) Italian do when he's not bellowing obscure lyrics into a microphone or tapping away frantically at a computer? Do you like football, as the location for your photo shoot suggests, or do you prefer to spend your Sundays crashed out in front of a nice 'giallo'? Perhaps you indulge in the occasional headfucker or some equally potent narcotic...?

"In my spare time I love to go buying comics (I like Bisley, Locke, McFarlane, Emond and lotsa other artists) or I adore to go running on mountains or go round with my motorbike. Yep, I'm also fond of football, but

the location of the photo shoot is not a football pitch. The photo was taken in a forsaken factory. (Sorry, but the one on the flyer for the 7" it looks as though you're standing in front of a stadium of some sort. See for yourselves! - Ed) I'm also a good fond of gore films like Bad Taste!"

"I don't indulge in the real headfucker (hey, finally one person who knows the meaning of this word!), I just love to indulge in the Headfucker authoress!"

I bet you do, I bet you do (nudge nudge, wink wink, say no more!) Is there anything you'd like to add? Give us a run-down, please, of your plans for the future. Thanks a lot for your time, Carlo. I guess it's nice to be in the passenger's seat for once, eh?

"Yup, it's cool to be the passenger sometimes (I just like to answer more than putting questions!). I must thanks you Greg for this nice, deep and intelligent interview. This is not a usual sentence to close an interview, you really sent me the best interview I ever got! I think The Crypt 2 will be one of the best 'zines around!"

"As for our projects... We hope to release a MCD soon and to promote our 7" with a huge amount of gigs. We're also minded to print some T-shirts (with Mark Riddick's artwork) within the summer! Hopefully also Headfucker 3 will be available soon!"

"Again, I thank you for your great support Greg and I hope your readers will write me in a mass!"

Agonia/Headfucker, CP 151, 25038 Rovato, Brescia, Italy.

DEICIDE

By Ali "The Metallian"

On the eve of the release of Deicide's third album, entitled "Once Upon the Cross", I managed to corner controversial vocalist/frontman Glen Benton to discuss all things Deicide-related. The band was headlining a series of dates as a part of the Easter Bash festivals which were taking place across Europe from April 2-14, featuring a total of 6 extreme metal bands. Being personally a part of the festival, I sat face to face with Glen in Copenhagen, Denmark to interview him.

Please describe the new album for us. What are your expectations for the new album?

"I wouldn't say I have high hopes for the new album, I really don't care. We will keep going, but if people don't buy the albums and we know it's a dead issue then we are going to give up. We'll know when it's time to quit. You gotta know when it's over. The day will come eventually. As for the album, "Once Upon the Cross" is comprised of super-catchy stuff, yet it is really brutal. It is going back to the first album's style of playing."

When you say the new album is going back to your first album, "Deicide", does that mean that you are not satisfied with your sophomore album "Legion"?

"We are still satisfied with it, but we realise that it was a tad too intricate. So now we are back to the simplistic type of material."

As in three riffs per song?

"No. When I say the newer material is simplistic I mean we don't throw anything out just because it's easy to play. We now both keep and use it."

Which is your favourite new song?

"Perhaps the title track..."

When at the beginning of this song you repeat the line "Fear him", who are you referring to?

"I am referring to Satan... Fear him!"

Why?

"Because if you read the lyrics to that song you notice that the word "upon" is used in the dictionary sense of the word. The first paragraph of the song deals with Christ going to the valley of temptation. He is being tempted by Satan. Then Satan, without Christ having a choice, makes Christ eat from the tree of life. The second verse goes into the crucifixion. Anyway, this song and "Behind the Light Thou Shalt Rise" are my favourites."

During all the recent live shows I have noticed that the fans have been shouting for "Dead By Dawn". Does it irritate you that the crowd favourite is one off the debut as opposed to the new one?

"No, it doesn't bother me. The tunes from the first album are good. People want to hear them regardless of when they are from. We can't deny them. That's why the third record is catchier."

Elsewhere I read that you are having some problems with your

cover...

"The record is released world-wide during Easter. In England, however, they didn't want to release it then because of the cover. There the release date is pushed back. The cover concept is different from the other albums. It shows everyone that Christ was only a human. On the cover a sheet is covering Christ's body. Then when you open it you see the sheet taken off. That's when you see the disembowelment."

Who came up with such a cover concept?!

"Yours truly."

And who illustrated it?

"Trevor Brown. He is an artist who is originally from the UK. He now lives in Tokyo, Japan. A friend of mine in Denver, Colorado knew him and hooked me up with him."

Elsewhere, having advocated Satanism on three albums, do you think you have been able to convert people?

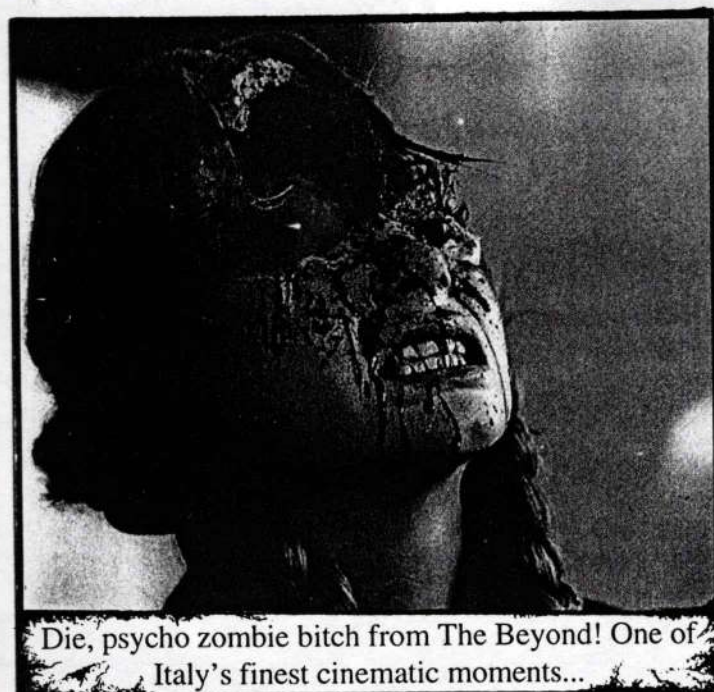
"I am waking up some people who relate to what I am saying, but for 90% of people it's just entertainment. It doesn't bother me if I am converting the kids or not. I am not a preacher. I write the lyrics to please myself and Satan solely. Defecate on your book of belief!"

What do you think of Norway's Satanic organisations and the black metal scene? They have stated that they only like Deicide because with your commerciality you will turn more people onto their bands. How do you feel about this?

"They've gotten something right with the commerciality. It's a fact that with the Satanic message I have more chances of reaching people. As for turning people onto their bands, kids in the US laugh at that shit. It might be good for Norway, but it's a small crowd as far as the rest of the world is concerned. As for the message, if you don't understand it and it doesn't have anything to do with today then it's meaningless!"

And for final comments?

"You know, we are all original members. There have been no personnel changes in this band since the beginning. We don't plan on giving up. The fans are what keeps us alive, it's simple."



Die, psycho zombie bitch from The Beyond! One of Italy's finest cinematic moments...





Immortal = black fucking metal. 'Nuff said I think. Here's a rather dull interview I did with Demonaz Doom Occulta last February. Naiveté is a wonderful thing, don't you think?

Hello Demonaz. How's the weather?

"Actually, the snow is falling and cold winds are soon to appear, so it's nearly perfect weather for a lot of things... To the north and into eternal winters!"

So, what's new (or old, as the case may be...) with Immortal?

"We are working our asses off for the promotion of 'Battles in the North'. It's the first time in a long period that we answer so many interviews and there's tons of mail to do... We are also quite busy writing new songs for our next record. We will hopefully make winter of next summer with the recording of it! The newest tracks are really interesting to work with. It's a pleasure to write songs when the inspiration is at hand!"

Is "Battles in the North" the record you had hoped for?

"The result is most satisfying. Compared to our first two albums we are better than ever. We have progressed a lot in song writing and playing. I believe we are closer to the ultimate Immortal than ever before... Nordic art at its coldest!! I'm really a bit frustrated that it came out so good. The songs are really perfect along with a quite special mastering of the CD."

Did Abbath drum on the new album like he did on "Pure Holocaust"? People have said that you used effects to speed up the drums in the studio like Slayer did, calling you fakes, etc. Fancy putting an end to the rumours?

"On 'Battles in the North' yes, Abbath did the drums on 'Pure Holocaust' and 'Battles...', but Hellhammer is with us now! The drums are not speeded up, but it's like 'Pure Holocaust'. A lot of rumours as always... Some people also say that they thought it was a drum machine on 'Pure Holocaust'... It's really pathetic! We are elite; people who speak behind our backs are not able to face us. Fakes, ha! We started this scene... We decide, along with a few others. Jealous people are good at starting all kinds of rumours, ha ha!"

Hellhammer, eh? Sounds to me like you've found a perfect match...

"It will be perfect indeed! It will be a pleasure to record the next album with a proper drummer. Also live will be a lot better from now!!"

Speaking of which, how did the tours with Rotting Christ/Blasphemy and Marduk go?

"The tour with us and Marduk was the best, as the tour with Rotting Christ and Blasphemy was based on shit conditions and was not that happening. Rotting Christ seemed to be jealous of us for some reasons!"

What do you think of Swedish black metal bands in general?

"Except for Marduk, I have only listened to some tracks by Dissection which I don't remember that much. I guess the Swedish scene has many bands, but only a few good ones! Bathory reigns!!"

Yep... always has, always will. Do you think the old black metal spirit still lives now that the scene has become so overcrowded? Not that I'm any great authority on it, mind...

"The spirit lives, but there are thousands of newcomers that don't mean a shit really. Tons of copy bands that try to steal the sound of Darkthrone, Mayhem, Burzum, Immortal, Emperor, etc.... The newer bands bore me a lot!!"

Me too, as does this thing about being "true". It's a tired question, I know, but how would you define true black metal?

"A lot, really a lot of the people that didn't like Immortal from the start are now buying our albums and trying to lick us in the ass. About being 'true', most people stress to be respected as 'true', but for us the word means nothing 'cause it's used by all the school kids into black metal. Immortal is dedicated to the old clan of the eighties musically... To blame Immortal for not being a real band is just incredible 'cause along with Darkthrone, Burzum and Mayhem we created the Norse scene and we're still alive!!"

Something I've noticed is that from the class of '92 you and Darkthrone are pretty much the only ones to have stayed out of jail, despite your rumoured involvement with the Inner Circle. Why?

"There was a lot of stress with the police and stuff and tons of strange things happened in this time. We were involved in many things at the time, but not too much... We prefer to shut our mouths about it 'cause we don't sell our mates to the police anyhow!"

Could you shed some light on the mysterious Blasphykh which keeps appearing in your lyrics?

"Blasphykh is the mighty Ravendark, which is what we prefer to call Nebulah's kingdom on earth. It's a place not far from here which has an eternal path to what we could call the Immortal world. We have made it exist, it's really hard to explain what you might believe is to be... existing. It's where all the inspirations come from..."

Was Old Funeral your very first band or did you have some sort of a garage Metal group in your younger days too?

"Old Funeral was not my band for a long time. I only played there in the beginning or so... Abbath and Varg played there longer than me, and the two others Padden (now in Enslaved, incidentally - Ed) and Tore. For me Old Funeral didn't mean as much as Amputation, which was my main project at the time. Satanel with Varg and Abbath was definitely something else!"

Are you still happy with the work Osmose are doing for you? How do you spend your royalties?

"Osmose give us good priority and make good work for the band. As for royalties, mostly everything is going in and out of the band and a lot is spent on equipment, etc., but of course a lot is used to live as usual!"

So you don't work like Darkthrone do for example?

"No, we prefer only to work with Immortal. We had some kinda jobs earlier, but no more!"

Are you proud to be a modern Norwegian? Surely there are some aspects of your society that are less desirable...

"Of course I am proud to be a Norwegian... Norway is the best place ever to live! Yes, there are many aspects of Norwegian society that are less inspiring, but the surroundings

where we live are perfect!"

What do you think about Scotland? It's very similar to Norway in some places, especially up north...

"I have seen some documentaries about Scotland on the TV here and some parts of your country are very interesting. Strange nature really... Endless fields that never seem to stop."

Do you listen to much other than black metal? Classics like Possessed, etc. maybe?

"Yes, I mostly listen to the old classics, and 'Beyond the Gates' is one of the best albums ever. I listen to Fields Of The Nephilim, which is great music at least... Today's black metal doesn't give me the real atmosphere except for a few bands. It's great to listen to old records and metal classics and of course Diamanda Galas and other atmospheric stuff!"

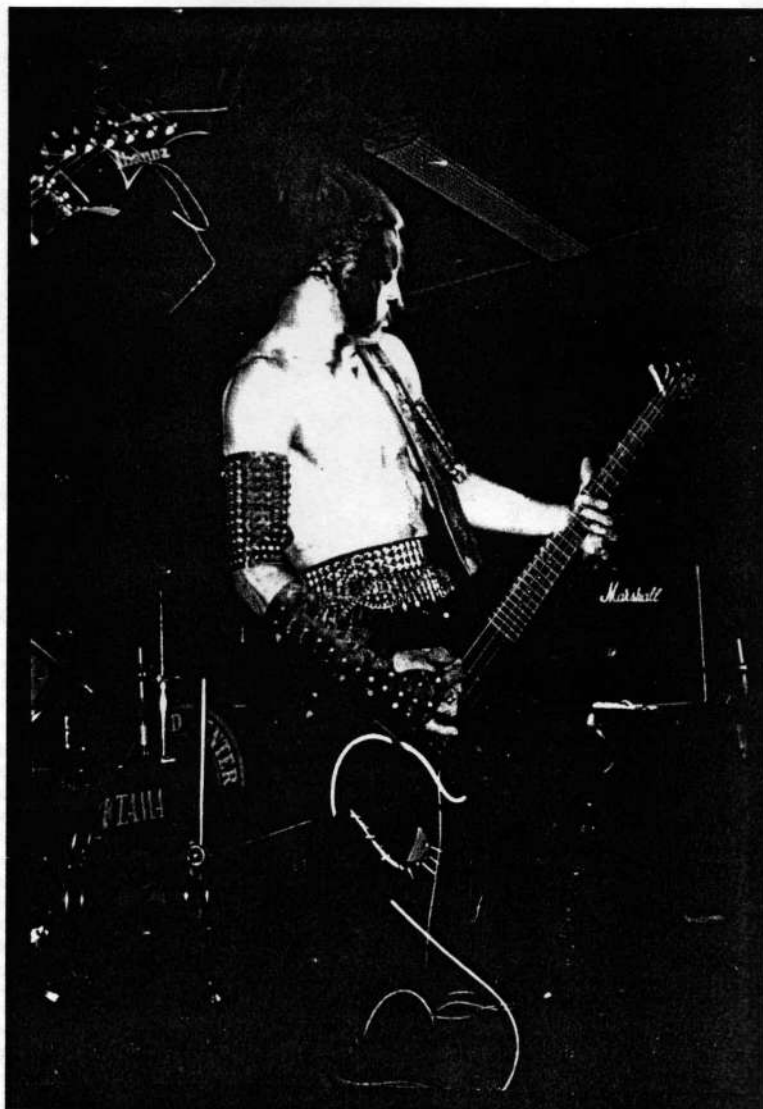
Did you know that Nuclear Blast put out an album by an Australian band called Horde, who play - wait for it - Christian black metal? Personally, I think it's pretty amusing.

"No, I didn't know, and it sounds so stupid that it nearly doesn't irritate me. They should be tortured and left on stakes! Christian people should not be allowed to have instruments or anything else!"

That's it. Sorry the questions weren't up to much! Is there anything else you'd like to add?

"The interview is much appreciated Gregory, Demon of Scotland!! Thanks again and keep in touch. Hope the answers are okay, if not too long and boring! Hear our album!"

Immortal, Postboks 12, 5215 Lysekloster, Norway.





Brutal death metal bands have always been something Sweden has lacked, but there are as always exceptions to the rule. Deranged for example. Now, whilst I appreciate the odd - okay, let's be honest here - frequent bit of black metal or whatever there is no denying the fact that death metal is the only musical genre still capable of producing bands that well and truly kick fuck outta me. Deranged, in case you hadn't already guessed, are one such a band. "Rated-X" is the title of their debut album for Repulse Records, and it was shortly before the release of this that my Irish friend Jamie Grimes (Disembodied) interviewed the Love Undertaker himself Rikard Wermen.

Hello Rikard. How are things in Hjarup today; are you busy?

"Thanx for asking! Everything is quite all right here... Am I busy? Shit, I'm at work right now, so things are not "busy"! Ha ha ha!"

Well, Deranged has quite a few releases out at the moment. Can you give us a run-down?

"Well, our first 7" single, "...The Confessions Continues", was recorded in February '93 and released by Obliteration Records from Japan. Ehm... limited to 1000 copies (sold out by now, I guess) and 3 songs that were also on our demo tape are on this one, but in totally new recorded versions. This 7" single was also censored/banned in Germany cuz of the cover and especially the lyrics, I guess! Next we have our first mini-CD "Architects of Perversions". Released by Repulse Records (ex-Drowned Productions) and Mike Amott is featured as guest guitarist on 3 of the 5 tracks. We recorded it in the winter of '93/'94 and I can't understand how that piece of crap could take 6 fucking days to record!!! Ehm... our 2nd 7" single was released by MMI Records from Germany and like with our first one this is limited to 1000 copies! 2 songs are on it, it's titled "Upon the Medical Slab" and we recorded it in February '94! I'm still quite satisfied with the "Upon the Medical Slab" disc, especially the intro 'cos it's the one and only time we (Deranged) have done our own and not ripped it off from a movie, ha ha!"

I noticed a few lyrical differences between the two EPs. Am I right in thinking that Deranged aren't interested in "medical" lyrics anymore? What made you change to a more "natural" gore approach?

"Ehm... it's Per who writes the lyrics, but I think I know what he thinks in this case! Yeah, there are some small differences between the first 7" single and the second one... I personally have *never* been into

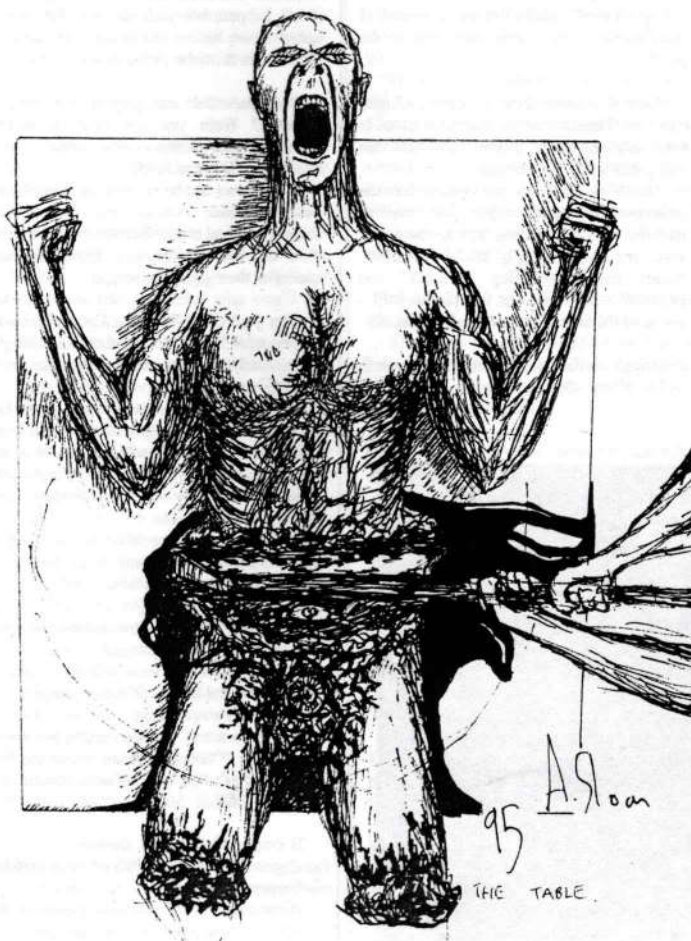
medical shit! Firstly, not many people know what the shit means, secondly I don't think it's brutal and thirdly I can't even pronounce any of the titles correct, ha! Anyway, I guess it's just a natural progression for us to have more "natural" song titles, but still gory and brutal! The lyrics are nowadays a whole lot more violent and brutal than before, but still it's the music that's most important for us! The lyrics are more there to give the whole thing an even more brutal, sick and disgusting touch! The same thing goes for the intros."

Are you still happy with your "Confessions of a Necrophile" demo? Why did you decide to re-record three tracks off it for your first EP?

"I have never been satisfied with that tape;

it sucks! But at the time we had no money and no other recordings to promote us, and we thought it was time to spread our name so we released the shit! Anyway, it sold pretty good, something like 600-700 copies in 6 months, so a lot of people enjoyed it and the response was also quite good. We re-recorded those 3 songs mainly to give them another chance, as we felt they needed a better sound and production than was on our demo. We also rewrote and rearranged some parts. Anyway, you can really hear the difference between the versions on our demo and the ones of the seven inch, so I don't think it was a rip-off like some guys said!!!!"

Tell us about your latest recording and that unreleased mini-CD.



"We will soon have a full-length CD out! It will be called "Rated-X" and 10 songs shall be on it! 8 brand new ones, one older thing called "Razor Tongue" and one cover (the Rolling Stones' "Paint it Black"). It will be released by Repulse Records in the near future and we recorded it at the same place we used for our second mini, Berno Studio. A great place, I am really satisfied with it! The production is just excellent and the sound is ultra heavy, brutal and deep! NO BULLSHIT! The first 2000 copies will be double CDs! The normal "Rated-X" disc plus our second mini that was never released as a 3" CD! Really cool... Our second mini was recorded in August last year. It is titled "Sculpture of the Dead" and four tracks are on it! It should have been released by Invasion Records, but it screwed up totally! A shame... The people that have been into us before will probably freak out when they hear this! It's a really fast and intense one... Watch out!"

What's the new material like in comparison to your older stuff?

"The new material is a whole lot faster, more brutal and more intense than the shit on "Architects..."! We had too much standard bullshit death metal stuff on the previous stuff, which we in some strange natural way more or less skipped during the half year we wrote "Rated-X" in. We have 1-2 new songs for our next CD and they are *fast*! No bullshit. We have of course also improved as musicians since we recorded "Architects...". Anyway, Deranged will always be about fast, intense, grinding death metal violence! No wimping out here!!!!"

You've never exactly sounded typically Swedish, have you? Do you think there still is a true Swedish sound? How is the brutal death metal scene over there at the moment?

"A lot of bands sounded like Entombed, Carnage, etc. in 1989-91 or something, and we hear the same thing now: Bands that more or less rip off In Flames, Eucharist, At The Gates and Dissection! It's a shame that people can't stick to their own thing... Anyway, you're right that we don't sound like a Swedish act, but who cares? We have always stuck to our own thing and never wimped out or conformed to the latest trend! There's lots of black metal bands around these days and, like, 95% of them, really suck! But still, the whole death metal thing needs these trends to wash away the crap bands, if you know what I mean... There's almost more grinding brutal death bands around these days here... Some cool Swedish bands are Seance, Corpsified, Defleshed and Vomitory... Check 'em out! True death metal!!!!"

Which movie was the intro from your first EP taken from and are you a big fan of gore films? Can you give us a list of your favourites? Which are cooler - cannibals or zombies?

"It was taken from Mark of the Devil! Mark of the Devil 2, I think... We have also ripped off intros from Zombie Flesheaters, Nightmare, Body Parts, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Gestapo's Last Orgy, Mark of the Devil, Killing America, Last House on the Left and from trailers for Love Me Deadly, Deranged and Der Todesking! Hey, I'm a big splatter, horror, gore, sleaze... whatever fan! I prefer cannibal movies, but Romero's trilogy is really, really great! I'm not a fan of Italian zombie movies... don't ask me why! Some of my favourites are Videodrome, Evil Dead (of course), Argento's movies, Meet the Feebles, Martin, Cannibal Holocaust (all-time fucking fave...), the four Ilsa films, Mark of the Devil 1 & 2 and Schramm. Natural Born Killers is also fucking great!"

Are you into tape trading? What are your favourite bands at the moment?

"Of course I like tape trading! This scene was built on tape traders! I trade some tapes too. A really good opportunity for me to get hold of advance stuff, ha! Fave bands? Shit... it's almost impossible, but I can sure write



down a couple of bands that I really enjoy... Kiss, Terrorizer, Fear Factory, Massacre, Suffocation, Led Zeppelin, Extreme Noise Terror, Napalm Death, Slayer, Cannibal Corpse, Brutal Truth, Kyuss, Acid Bath, Monster Magnet, Black Sabbath, No Security, Cryptopsy, Autopsy, Nihilist/Entombed, Seance, Corrosion Of Conformity, Imprecation, Repulsion and Motorhead!!"

Is death metal dead?

"I don't think that death metal is dead! Hell no, it's just not as trendy as it used to be! I don't know how it is in Ireland, but hardcore - or better - pop punk is very popular in Sweden right now, and it sure sucks! I can't understand how people can say that death metal is dead! Probably some stupid journalist! Critics *never* liked death metal, and especially not the kind of death metal we're playing! As I said before, black metal sucks but there are some cool black bands around. Ehm... once again I don't know what it's like in Ireland, but here in Sweden a lot of youths want to be independent but still part of a group, if you know what I mean. The people that buy black metal albums are 90% 14-16 year olds that probably think it's cool to be "evil"! Black metal sure sells, and is in my opinion as commercial as Kiss was in '78-'79! Maybe a lot of new bands will come out now... I don't know... maybe brutal and grinding death metal will be the next trend... Hopefully not!!!"

How did the Amott leads on the first mini-CD come about and are there any plans for him to join as a permanent member?

"Per knows Amott as Spiritual Beggars' (Mike's new band) CD was released by

Per's label Wrong Again Records. Amott was visiting Per at the time we were recording the CD, so we asked him if he would like to do a couple of solos, just for fun you know. **NO!** There are no plans for him to join us!!"

Your opinions, please, on the following: i) Ireland ii) child molestation iii) the OJ Simpson trial and iv) Swedish folk music.

"i) Lots of Guinness and whiskey! Guinness sucks, but whiskey is a life water! ii) I love children and animals... people that hurt children in any way should of course get their punishment and I'd rather see a fucking pedophile going to jail than some spy, y'know? The system sucks! iii) Ha... what a joke! Kill the motherfucker!!! The funniest thing I saw was when the cops caught him dressed up like bushes! iv) That's something for In Flames and Dia Psalma..."

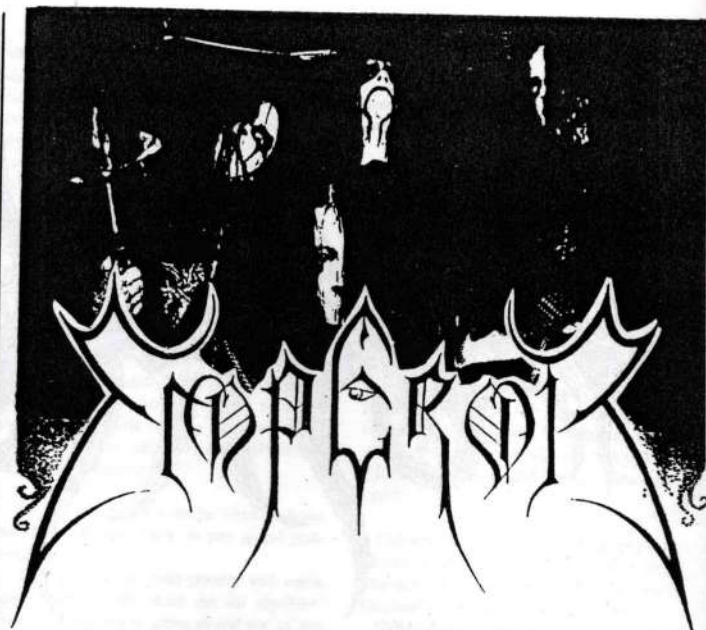
Teach me a Swedish insult and make it as offensive as you like

"Jag ska straff - knulla din brud I roven!!! (I shall punish - fuck your girlfriend in the ass!!)"

Mmm, I must remember that one! Right, that's all. Thanks a lot for your time mate! Is there anything you'd like to add? How can folk get in touch, for example?

"Thanx as hell to you Jamie for the interview... an excellent one! Can't wait to read the 'zine! Any bands, 'zines, whatever... write me today! **FUCK** IRCs! Stay sick, bizarre and drunk! Buy "Rated-X" and PLEASE don't write for free/promo stuff - just send me a blank tape instead! Thanx..."

Deranged c/o Rikard Wermen, Angavegen 2, 245 62 Hjarup, Sweden.



'Tis debatable whether or not the phenomenal success Emperor have been enjoying since the release of their first full-length album is actually doing their scene any good, but there is no denying the fact that their music transcends all boundaries - artistic and financial.

Over the years they have featured in countless fanzines and magazines, each interview bristling with that special Norwegian sense of humour. This one was done in mid-1993 and is thus not quite as relevant as it could or should be, but beggars can't be choosers. I just wish Ross had chosen to do Faust or Ihsahn instead of Samoth, as they - at least - have more than two brain cells to rub together...

How do you feel today? Anything special happen?

"We are now fucking exhausted after the day's rehearsal and we have just stuffed our stomachs with some meat, so anything special didn't happen, but yesterday we discovered some moist caves and visited an ancient church ruin from the 11th century."

What part did you play in the church burnings? Were you not held in police custody? What is the current situation and what does the future hold?

"God knows and he is weeping. Yes, I was held in police custody and the current situation is total chaos. Behold the future and thou wilt see. By the way, Entombed just cancelled their gig in Norway..."

After your debut MLP for Candlelight you will do a MLP for DSP and then a full-length for Candlelight. Why are you jumping from label to label?

"This is not the present situation. The plan was to release our first full-length LP on DSP after the mini-LP on Candlelight, but now we have decided to stay with Candlelight because we are very satisfied with their work and we think they can do more for us now than DSP can, so our label is Candlelight. Await our full-length album "In the Nightside Eclipse" (out late '93) (ahem... - Edy)"

What does your live show involve and what would you do if people stagedive?

"The Emperor live show will be a mass of blood, fire and death. We hate stagedivers and one cannot ignore the fact that a spontaneous act of violence might be caused upon them. (One can also not ignore the fact that you don't half talk bollocks sometimes, Samoth - Edy)"

Is corpsepaint just for shows/photos or do you go out in the street with it? Who or what influenced to wear it?

"First of all, we hardly ever go out in the streets. Corpsepaint is to be used in connection with the magic art of black metal

and other dark actions like journeys into the majestic, soul-breeding nature of Norway. Corpsepaint is not to be used while walking among the pathetic inhabitants of modern technological cities. By the way, corpsepaint is more or less exploited by the "true" and "evil" "black metal" nerds. Influenced? Corpsepaint belongs to the cult act of black metal."

What new bands has DSP signed and is there anything worthwhile to be released soon?

"Sigh and Monumentum. Soon to be released is the too long awaited "De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas", also await Enslaved's "Viknigr Veldi" album."

You have proclaimed your self the Lord of Silence. How long have you been silent and are any other members of Emperor silent?

"Silence is not only associated with denial of speech, but also situations of melancholy or the creepy silence in the night side eclipse. I have more or less always had a silent personality. None of the Emperor members are actually of a boisterous character."

Tell us something about each member.

"There is no point in stressing out our high personalities divided, as it is the personal totality of Emperor that is important."

Darkthrone insist they don't want to sell a lot of records and Grishnack says he wants to live off the music. Is the scene in ruins?

"Has not the thought struck you that Darkthrone and Count Grishnack might not share the same opinions on the subject? (Well, I thought you all shared the same opinions in this Norwegian circle - Ross) Personally we will like to sell tons of albums. We have dedicated our lives to the black metal lifestyle. Why should we keep rotting in a stinking rehearsal room when we can spread the wrath of the tyrant throughout the world and even take advantages like big money and great power out of it? Yes, the so-called scene is in total ruins, anyway, we don't care, we do what's best for us and the band."

Nowadays what do you think about the old Thou Shalt Suffer stuff? Is it still going?

"Ihsahn is still feeding the flames of Thou Shalt Suffer and a full-length is "soon" to be released on Necropolis Records. Compared to the new compositions, the old material is of no importance."

Future plans? Last words? Merchandise?

"We will keep on our journey towards the pantheon. Write to Candlelight for merchandise information."

Candlelight Records, PO Box 328, High Wycombe, Bucks HP15 6TY, England.





Necromantia are definitely my favourite Greek band, which is quite a feat considering the competition. Their records are exceptionally dark, "evil" if you like, and atmospheric, but in a different sense than those of their Scandinavian counterparts. I doubt this interview will make many of you want to hear their music, but it is well worth the effort... believe me! Ross interviewed Morbid in 1993, just before "Crossing the Fiery Path" was unleashed.

When was Necromantia formed and what is the ideology of the band?

"We were formed around November '89 under the blessings of the undead gods of night! Our aim and cause is to create Satanic music and spread the word of the Grand Dragon of Chaos."

Your full length was originally intended to come out on No Fashion, but this is no longer the case. Who is releasing it now? Please tell us something about your own label Spellbound Records.

"Well, concerning the LP/CD will finally be out on Osmose Productions this album entitled "Crossing the Fiery Path". It's pure Satanic art! Sorrowful, epic, violent, dark and evil! With No Fashion didn't work out 'cause they couldn't accomplish what they promised on time. Concerning my label Spellbound Records, it's a project that will release only black or black/death metal bands. We've released a comp. LP "The Wine of Satan" with first time on vinyl trax from Beherit, Corpse Molestation, Mortuary Drape, The Black, etc. Evil stuff! Probably two 7" EPs will follow, one of Nepenthe (US) and one of Corpse Molestation (Aus)... nothing is sure yet!"

I heard that you weren't going to be signed by Osmose and that Mystifier got a deal instead because they thought they would sell more records!

"As you can see we signed to Osmose! I don't know what Herve thought when he first denied, but then he called us back with a changed mind! He is an OK guy."

You are also in Thou Art Lord, so tell us something about this project. What releases do you have?

"We've released two 7" EPs (one is split with Ancient Rites). Fucking evil brutal stuff! We formed this band against the trend that nowadays poisons black metal!"

So you think black metal is now a trend. Why do you think this is so? I guess you've heard that Burzum will sign to Earache Records...

"Black metal has become a trend recently! You see, Satan is a good seller and everyone wants to jump on the wagon and suddenly everyone is "true"! Where were all you true people all these years? Anyway, it doesn't matter what label you sign with as long as your music and attitude stays underground and as true as it was! In the case of Mr Grishnack, Burzum declared 4-5 months ago that DSP is the only true label and now he's signed with Earache. Isn't this weird?"

Which country has the best scene, do you think, and why?

"Greece! I don't say this because I'm Greek, but Greek bands are truly unique! Every band has got its own style and

originality and there's a truly mystical dark atmosphere penetrating the music of all bands. I think Norway follows!"

When I compare your demo '90 to your demo '93 your sound is not so chaotic anymore. Perhaps you don't agree? Are you happy with all your releases?

"We love all our releases! Every release is kind of different, sustaining darkness and majesty as the common factor. I think our new stuff is a mixture of our old releases! Though ritualistic, it is more concrete and well played. The message and feeling remains the same!"

You've also taken on a new member. Is this on a full-time basis? Must a person hold certain beliefs to be in Necromantia?

"Yes he is! Also a long-time associate of the band Yiannis - The Worshipper Of Pan joined the band as a full-time member. Things needed for someone to join are: Disgust for Christianity and its mortality, attraction to the night (not necessarily a belief) and a good musician."

Will you go on tour with Rotting Christ in Europe at the end of '93 with some other Osmose bands? Who will you tour with and would you come to the UK? Would you tour even if it interrupted the work of Necromantia?

"Yes, the tour will start on December 16th with Impaled Nazarene (not sure anymore) and Blasphemy. I don't think we'll play in the UK, fuck God! If this tour was mixed with the work of Necromantia I'd try to change the date and if not I'd probably (not sure) not go. It depends on the situation."

Are there any plans to make a promo video?

"No, not at the moment. We don't like videos much but I don't know what the future will bring."

Is the promo '90 and split LP with Varathron still available? Do you think Varathron was the right band to do a split LP with? If you had the choice who would you like to do a split release with?

"Promo '90 is not available anymore, but the split LP with Varathron will be reprinted (out in September) on colour vinyl and gatefold inner sleeve. Varathron are brothers and yes it was the right choice 'cause they are a dark band too! The ultimate split release for me would be with Bathory or Merciful Fate! Fuck! Greatness!"

Do you think the day will come when Christians start playing black metal?

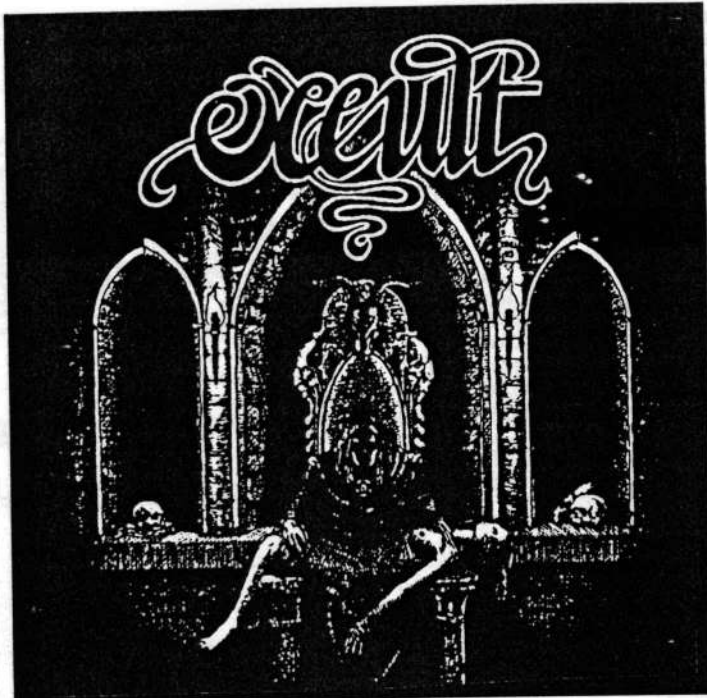
"It will not be black metal that way! Christians have nothing to do with black or death metal, so they better quit! It's for promotional reasons anyway."

Last words and merchandise?

"Our demo is sold out! Not available anymore! Osmose will print shirts soon! Praise the beat! Hail Satanas."

PO Box 79006, 17202 Himittos, Athens, Greece.

Editor's note: For some reason the Greek postal service has something against black metal. Do not write or draw anything but the above address on yer envelopes!



Once upon a time there was a band from Holland named Bestial Summoning. They sucked. Fortunately, they split up after recording a mercifully limited LP for No Fashion and from the ashes rose Occult. They don't suck. They play old-style black/thrash that reeks of Slayer, an album's worth of which was released in the spring of '94 by Foundation 2000. Ross interviewed his mate Sephiroth just before the foursome's one and only demo was released.

Is it true that Bestial Summoning has split up? Why was this?

"Greetings. Yes, Bestial Summoning has totally split up. We didn't stop Bestial Summoning because of fights or anything, we just said that one album is enough. No more future for Bestial Summoning."

Now you are in Occult. I've not heard so much about this band so could you tell us a bit?

"Well, the band consists of new members. I am the only one from Bestial Summoning playing in Occult. The other members are not deeply black metal maniacs so you can see as a band like They Abhorrent of Merciful Fate, I use paint and the rest don't. Musically we are fast and simple with screamy vocals! I think influences are old Mayhem, Bathory and old Acheron."

When will you record your first demo and can you give us some info on this?

"The demo will be recorded on the 10th of July, so it will be out the end of July for sure. Limited to only 666 copies, professionally printed cover and tape!!!"

What are Occult's live shows like and what sort of people turn up at them?

"Well, our shows are great! I wear paint, bullet belts and a black cape. I burn an inverted cross in my hands, destroy crosses with a small axe, destroy bibles and pictures of the pope... I am a member of the True Satanists Horde so I only get true people to see us live. I've been into this music for many years, so I only have friends that are also many years in the scene, so the crowd is the best!"

What do you think of the yearly Dutch Dynamo festival? Have you ever been to this event and would Occult ever play at this festival?

"I don't like the bands they invite, but last year I went for Merciful Fate... It's always good to see people you know. People from France or Germany or Belgium that you're writing with. Occult won't play there... no chance!!!"

Where did Melektaus get a piece of Dead's skull from? Do you plan on writing any more songs dedicated to people? It seems to be quite trendy now...

"He got it from Evil of Abruptum. No, I won't dedicate any song of Occult to someone. Everyone does it now, especially to Dead, but most people don't know about Dead so much."

Do you think people are more interested in money than music? What do you think Dead would make of the underground scene today?

"Truly, Occult did now two gigs for almost free. I am not into money but I alone cannot clear the scene from the jerks. I think if Dead came out of his grave and saw this he couldn't imagine how we can live in this shitty underground world!"

How are your relations with NFR? Has Occult had any label interest yet?

"I haven't talked with No Fashion for about a year now! Occult is only concentrating on their demo, nothing else!"

How do you view the Dutch scene? Any bands you could recommend?

"The Dutch scene is crap. Occult is the ONLY true black metal band from Holland. Maybe there are some serious people who play in bands in Holland, but then the music is total shit! Most of the bands playing so-called "black metal" are people under 16 years old and formed in 1993. I think I cannot take this seriously! Most of the time they are nothing but bad copies of Norwegian bands."

What do you think of dark bands like Necromantia and Abruptum who do not play the traditional black metal style?

"Fucking the best! I like bands like Abruptum and Necromantia who make their own style of black metal... Originality fucking rules!"

What do you think of the recent Bathory compilation CDs "Jubileum" Vol. 1 and Vol. 2?

"I like the old Bathory stuff the most... the demo tracks are great!"

What's the place you live like?

"A world where zombies walk and where I can decapitate their heads with an axe the whole day long."

Last words?

"Hail Satanas... hail to the True Satanists Horde!!!"

Occult, Antoniusstraat 109, 5912 CJ Venlo, Holland.

The name Ordog will probably ring no bells, mainly because the band is almost completely unheard of outside Scotland. Hell, even their fellow countrymen seldom catch glimpses of them either on stage or wherever else one might expect to catch glimpses of obscure underground musicians. Popularity is not something they strive for, particularly, and this I find admirable to say the least. Call it laziness if you will, but I prefer to think that by keeping themselves to themselves Ordog have succeeded in avoiding much of the nastiness our beloved music scene carries with it these days.

Over the two-and-a-bit years of their existence they have recorded three demo tapes, all of which I have found intensely likeable and delightfully unorthodox. Black metal is as good a description as any for their sound, but they themselves prefer the term "winter landscape music". Fair enough. Bottom line is, I like it, and that's why I chose to interview sticksman, contributor and friend Ross Meikle when he came to visit once upon a time.

Introduce yourself, Ross.
"I play drums in Ordog."

Yours is a pretty unknown band, so give us a biography.

"We formed in 1993, had a rehearsal, had a second rehearsal and released that as the first demo, 'Denn Die Todten...'. We did a second demo about a year later and a third demo about eight months after that. We did two gigs during that time."

You've kept a pretty low profile, considering the extent of your involvement with the black metal underground. Was this because you wanted the band to mature a little before you started spreading the name or purely because you're not all that bothered about fame anyway?

"A bit of both. We're building up the amount of demos we spread with each release anyway. The first one done about thirty and the second one about seventy. The third one will hopefully do a bit more, but we're not really too bothered about spreading it that much anyway. We just get Aesthetic Death to distribute it all and keep a pretty low profile on things. No photographs... stuff like that."

Not exactly a common ploy for a black metal band, given the largely sensationalist nature of the genre. Certain bands - I won't mention names but I'm sure you will - seem to have their lyrics and image all worked out before putting anything down on tape...

"Aye, I think I know who you're talking about there, but no names mentioned... I'd just like to say that whenever I step in a dog shit I like to go and find the owner and I like to smear his own dog's shit on his door with a stick. Yeah, and after we're finished smearing dog shit on people's doors we just go and have a rehearsal. We sometimes even draw inverted crosses on people's doors in dog shit, believe it or not. (This is an in-joke Ross and I have about a certain Glaswegian band whose interview I chose not to print for a number of reasons - Ed)."

How does the songwriting process work - is it fairly democratic or do you do all the hard work?

"For the first demo there was only two of us. I'm a drummer - I don't even play guitar - but I wrote half the riffs on the first one and about half the riffs on the second one. The same with the lyrics: I wrote half of them on the first one and the second one. Now on this third one I wrote pretty much all the guitar riffs, just put a rough structure down, showed the others and we just hit it. They put a lot more complex parts in, seeing as I'm not really a guitarist, so I just build a framework



winter landscape music

and the other two come along when their wrecked and warp it up, heh heh!"

Do you have to be in a specific frame of mind to write?

"No, not really. Sometimes I can just sit down with a guitar, watching the TV and play something I don't even know I'm playing. Then I'll notice and just put it down on a tape. Most of the time I just write separate riffs and just put them together if I think they fit in with each other. Then I'll just give them the riffs and say which one comes first, which one comes second, lay down a basic structure, then we just hit it and normally use the first or second take of each song we do with the drums and vocals. We make it up as we go along pretty much, but we always have the basic riffs. A lot of people might think that we just go in and play whatever comes into our heads at the time, but it's not really quite like that. Sometimes I've written the riffs over six months or something and just put them together. I've got tons of riff tapes, so that's normally what happens. For us, anyway, working this way just keeps the whole sound a lot fresher. People will listen to it and no doubt think that it's awful slack, but you have to consider that with most of the songs it's the first or second take ever with drums and stuff and that only because I know the riffs I'm able to have a rough idea of what's next and when it'll stop for me to come in again. It just helps preserve the enthusiasm and excitement there. You'd just get bored sitting down and banging away at a song over and over again. We do anyway, and that's why there's no point in trying to perfect songs. There are fuck-ups, of course, and we easily pick them out, but if you heard a first take by someone like Mayhem even I'm sure they wouldn't even get to the end of it. The fact that we can even get to the end of it, regardless of any fuck-ups, just helps capture the excitement, you know?"

Listening to "17.19.20", it's fairly obvious that what you're playing now has a more original feel to it. It's certainly different to what everyone else is doing at the moment.

"I think it's the bass in this one that really does it because this is the first one we've ever put bass on. It really has brought a new element in, 'cuz normally we're under the influence of something... Overkill usually. There's a veritable heavy metal overdose... a Heavy Metal Breakdown in the studio (Ross and I had had an eighties metal/Noise Records type weekend, in case you're wondering - Ed)."

Even though you seem to place an emphasis on the musical side of things, you must obviously have given some thought to the lyrics and the kind of imagery you use.

"Aye. Well, I guess we've got a stronger, more individual image than most bands do that really work on their image and promote themselves through it. We're all pretty normal guys, as it were, in that we don't wear tons of bullet belts, spikes and what have you. If you saw me walking down the street

you probably wouldn't think I was in black metal band at all. To me the whole thing with image has been so overdone. Don't get me wrong here - I love old Bathory, Celtic Frost, old Mayhem and the imagery they used, but it's just been done so many times that everyone has lost their own identity and their own way of thinking. It's just a mould you get into; you just get stuck in a rut of everyone else's images. I mean, when I'm listening to a black metal band I'm not listening to them because they wear spikes or something. I just want to hear the atmosphere within the music. I don't give a shit what they look like or anything. It's a lot more important what your music is like."

Saying that, however, Euronymous in particular believed that black metal *had* an image to keep up. Do you think that still counts in 1995 or was it more of an early nineties thing? You know, when death metal was at its - shall we say - trendiest.

"I dunno... the original idea was good enough, but it's like everything else: too many people took onto it and just spoiled it basically. He also didn't want it to be widely accepted and that's basically what happened. It was an attitude more than anything else, but nowadays it's more of a fashion. Most people who are now wearing spikes and stuff were no doubt wearing skateboard-type clothes a few years ago. I can't see it lasting, though. They'll probably grow out of it sooner or later, or most of them will. There will be a few die-hard people - there always is - but I think the majority of people now don't have long to go. Within the next few years I think they'll just move onto whatever the next trend is. Electronic stuff, probably."

These days it seems like the majority of the truly talented people involved have moved onto something more meaningful, more personal.

"Uh-huh. With a lot of the new stuff like Ved Buens Ende, Fleurety, etc. the bands are starting to put a bit more of their own ideas in rather than just imitating. I think that's what is going to separate bands in the future anyway. You're always going to have the great black metal bands, the originals, and the odd one that comes along that is so good that they can get away with not being original, but I think that's pretty much the way it's going to go; bands finding their own sound while still basing their music around the loose black metal framework. With the amount of different styles of music we all listen to it'd be hard just to play pure black metal even if we wanted to, so we've been bringing in some weirder stuff - I don't know what you'd call it - but it's a bit different anyway. Warped black metal, I suppose..."

Are you at all bothered what other people make of your music? I suppose there has to be some kind of a balance between creating purely for yourselves and for the enjoyment of others...

"Well, yes and no. Basically, I do it for myself. It's always interesting to get a

response from people to see what they think, some kind of a reaction. Whether it's positive or negative is really irrelevant to me because I'm doing it primarily for myself. If I wasn't then I'd probably put the image into it and print the lyrics and titles. I'd release photographs, I'd be sending stuff to labels, I'd charge a fortune for demos, I'd be putting a lot of production into them. I don't really bother with all that, though. I wouldn't mind if a label was interested, of course, and if we got offered a deal we'd take it straight away. It'd be good to go into an actual studio and do a professional recording, as that would leave a lot of room for effects and what have you in the music. Everything would probably come out a lot clearer too, but I think

the next demo will have a lot more slow parts on it so you can hear what's going on a bit more. With the kind of production we use, which is nothing, the fast bits just come over as a blur. Money could make us sound like a completely different band. We're that used to just going in and doing our own thing in private. We don't have producers or anyone else like that running about, so we can just let go and go for it in the rehearsal studio with a tape recorder."

Do you listen to your own music a lot, then, seeing as you make it for yourselves?

"Yeah, normally at weekends we all get together and have a drink and whatnot and just basically sit and listen to it and have a good laugh. It's definitely not a joke band, nothing like that, but it's often funny hearing some of the vocals you've done yourself. Nearly every weekend we sit and listen to the tapes, Saturday nights or whatever, just sitting about. It's quite interesting. Occasionally some of our mates come over, and it's interesting to see what they make of it."

How has the general response been to your tapes so far?

"I don't really know. I generally don't deal with mail connected to the band at all. I don't really deal with mail full-stop, actually, but I'd be interested to see the reaction on the third demo when it comes out because it's different from what we've done before."

What inspires you musically at the moment? What about when you first started?

"I'd say when we first started out it was just your usual... black metal sound. The second one was pretty much the same, although there were a few different bits creeping in. The third one, like I said, is a lot more different. We're into all sorts of stuff from your basic black metal to goth stuff and old heavy metal. Electronic stuff, ambient and medieval music... everything really. For me, the biggest influence has been Kong because they're so original, you know? I try and incorporate some of their ideas into my music without blatantly copying them. Everyone in the band is really into them actually, and it's quite an unusual element to try and bring into this sort of music."

Do you find it difficult sometimes to come up with material that doesn't sound like anyone else or is this not really taken into consideration when you're writing?

"I don't know. I mean, people have said that one of the tracks on the new demo sounds just like Darkthrone but I take that as a compliment more than anything else. Obviously we don't want to write a whole demo full of stuff that's been done before. There are very few bands that don't sound like somebody else anyway these days. Basically, they sound like somebody that most people in their scene haven't heard. For example, Fenriz's Neptune Towers project... most people that bought that probably thought that it was really original whereas in actual fact it is just a blatant rip-off of '70s

synthesiser music. I think pretty much everyone is influenced by something and the people that say they're not influenced by anything are talking out of their arse."

What kind of atmospheres are you trying to create within your music? Similarly, do you think that music without atmosphere or emotion becomes worthless?

"I know it's been said a lot, but I like to think that we create quite dark, winter landscapes/out-in-the-middle-of-nowhere type atmospheres. Beautiful landscapes more than anything else, I suppose. As for the emotion thing, yeah, pretty much. Music is all about emotion. That's what they do it for; they either feel aggressive or... I mean, even stuff like grind - that's just a whole load of emotional energy. Aggression, you know? Nah, I think music without emotion in it is just... well, it's just like listening to traffic in a street."

What makes an Ordog song an Ordog song?

"Well, bands these days seem to be obsessed by big productions, but it's pretty obvious when you put on one of our tapes that we're not. I'd say that that is what makes us who we are - the sound, the general sound. Not even the songs themselves. We're starting to sound a bit more individual. I think people will be able to listen to our tape and say that's Ordog."

Are there any bands you feel particularly close to in terms of the way you write, for example, or are you all alone?

"Ha ha ha. I don't really know... I don't think I'd compare us to any other band in the way we write stuff. The lyrics as well - we don't even release the titles of them - aren't really the usual stuff anymore anyway. They're quite personal, I suppose. I don't think the other guys in the band really understand my lyrics and I don't understand the lyrics that the vocalist comes up with either. That's fair enough, though, because the vocals are basically just there as another instrument as far as anyone outside of the band is concerned as they probably don't know what we're on about anyway."

What do you think of all these side projects that the so-called celebrities within the scene have been coming out with lately? Are they worth the vinyl they're printed on?

"I don't really think it's such a good idea because you could end up with ten albums or so, all with the same guy, under a different name. I for one don't think I could do ten project bands. It's just kinda diluting your ideas. I mean, if they want to do it for themselves - fair enough - but there are just a lot of idiots out there who buy something just because somebody from Darkthrone's in it. When it comes down to it a lot of it is just rubbish anyway. I'd rather they just stuck to their original bands because there are that many albums out there, all with different styles, that you don't really need one guy trying to do a hundred bands and releasing umpteen CDs on his own label. I haven't got

the money or the time for it, but they seem to be getting away with it at the moment. Don't buy that shit!"

Can you see a lot of this new black metal lasting to the same extent as the early works of Venom. Frost and Bathory have? They're pretty much timeless because they embody the mood of the time perfectly, but nowadays most people seem quite happy just copying them...

"I don't really want to copy Bathory or Frost or anything. Even the bands that try and copy them now just fail because the recording set-ups are completely different, for one thing. It's ten or fifteen years on and you can hear that. Those bands were the originals and there is no need for hundreds of new bands trying to copy them. At the time they were doing something completely original and it's pointless trying to copy that because the feeling is different, the production is different... I'd rather try and create something that's my own instead of just copying something from ten or fifteen years ago. Not blatantly anyway, because obviously you're going to lift influences from them but trying to go out of your way to copy them is stupid. I'd rather listen to the originals than some copy band ten years on. I think a band like Mayhem will always be considered a classic because they originated the whole black metal thing after Bathory. I mean, Bathory and Celtic Frost pretty much went down the pan, but I think Mayhem - probably Burzum as well - will be regarded as classics forever. You'll probably have people in ten years' time trying to recreate what they were doing when everything's moved on, which probably won't be such a good idea."

What do you seek in a band as a listener?

"Atmosphere. Originality too... in fact it's pretty much mainly originality because if you've already got a few albums in a certain style you don't want a band that sounds like all the other albums. That's what is happening now; you've got a flood of stuff that you can't even tell apart. They don't have any character of their own - they all look like each other, they all sound like each other, they all repeat each other's quotes (or steal the big bands' quotes)... it's just a joke! I think the whole thing would be far less stale and a lot more interesting if people just thought for themselves for a change. Do what thou wilt, and all that... There are a lot of thickies running about now. They read about Burzum in Metal Hammer and think *Oh yeah, I'll have a shot of that* and they go and form a band from nothing. They pick up instruments they can't even play without any ideas of their own. All their lyrics and everything... it's just a big rip-off!"

'Zines and info: Ross Meikle, 6 Tulliallan Place, East Kilbride, Scotland.

Orders: Aesthetic Death, Silwood, Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcs WR10 3AP, England. (Each tape will cost you £2 in the UK, \$4 in Europe and \$5 elsewhere).

Monumentu

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF NIHILISM

Ross conducted this short and sharp interview with Roberto Mammarella from Monumentum a good while before their masterly debut album was recorded and released (mid-'93), but asked me to print it anyway. I was planning to re-do it myself, but couldn't muster the effort or will power to do so. Next time, I promise.

Your debut LP/CD will be released on DSP, right? Tell us a bit about it.

"Yes, it will. 'In Absentia Christi' will end this dirty summer and open again a dark autumn of pains. We're going to sign a three album deal with DSP."

How would you describe your sound and what are your primary influences?

"I define it dark sound. Musically, I'm influenced by obscure outfits like Violet Theatre, Cocteau Twins, Thorns and Ataraxia. I try to avoid evident influences, but it is not always possible. The spirit and meaning of the band is influenced by this non-existing grey life."

Were you not considering changing your name to Garden Of Stone?

"Why would I? Why don't you consider changing the name of this mag to Metal of Hell mag? Is this a question?!"

You also run Obscure Plasma Records (now Avantgarde Music). Tell us what is currently available and what is planned for the future. Why not release Monumentum's LP on Obscure Plasma? Will the Mayhem LP be released on CD?

"Yes, well the Mayhem live LP will be pressed onto CD. Currently we just released Sinoath and Nordor cassette EPs. We are going to release Ophthalamia's 'Journey into Darkness' CD, Thergoth's 'Streams from the Heavens' CD and Chorus Of Ruin's 7". A Monumentum LP on Obscure Plasma would be too easy a way to get signed... Would I sign myself?"

Your lyrics... are they fact or fiction?

"Everything on earth is fiction. We do not exist. We are the unreal living. Monumentum

doesn't exist, your mag doesn't exist, this interview doesn't exist. I deny my existence."

How has the split 7" with Rotting Christ sold? Do you think R. Christ was the right band to do a split 7" with?

"Only 30-40 copies left now (July '93), so it has sold 970 copies. No, Rotting Christ was not the right band. I would not repeat this release, but they were the right band to attract attention to my band. Am I a commercial wimp? Yes, but who is not in this crappy "scene"?"

What is your opinion on the recent "terrorist" activities in Norway? What do you think of Norwegian bands?

"Maim, pain, murders are the only way to be alive (but non-existing). I support everything/everyone spreading terror and pain to other humans! My dream is to become the supreme king of tragedies. Good/real and wimpy/trendy bands are everywhere. It is no more of a problem in Norway than in Sweden or Kenya. Besides music, Norway is my favourite place on earth and I go there each time it's possible to."

Do you see Monumentum's sound changing in the future?

"Yes, in a darker way. I'll try to represent fog, tragedies and traumatic childhood with my music."

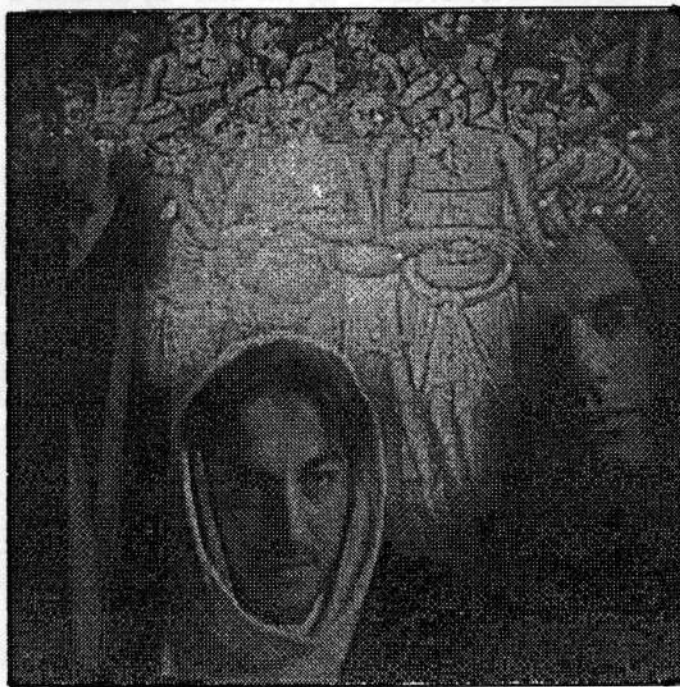
Have you played any live shows? Will you ever?

"We never played live and we'll never play. I hate the atmosphere at gigs here. Also I think that we'd gather a crowd of 30/50 people (in Italy). That's quite humiliating, so I think I'll avoid it completely."

The end is near... last words?

"The end actually happened when we first saw the light of day, so there's nothing to end. Spread illness and tragedies. Thanx for the interview."

Monumentum c/o Roberto Mammarella, CP 19, 20010 Vanzago (MI), Italy.



Somewhat of a special interest feature here, methinks, as Nuclear Death are definitely not your average trendy Crypt-like band. In fact, they are and always have been a 100% cult underground act and therefore loathed by the masses. Me, I think they're brilliant. Why? I'm not sure actually, as with most cult bands...

I remember the first time I heard their "Bride of Insect" LP - back in 1990 I think it was - in one of the listening booths of my local record store with headphones on and the volume up. Reading along with the music, I actually felt physically sick, so deranged were the lyrics and so bizarre the record itself. Cool shit, as it were, at the tender age of twelve or whatever...

Since then my interest has waned somewhat, even though I loved their second album "Carion for Worm", but having had this interview and album number three "All Creatures Great and Eaten" kindly passed on to me by Bill of Anatomia 'zine, the old enthusiasm/revulsion is back with a vengeance...

Let's start by discussing what happened to Nuclear Death after the release of "For Our Dead" on WRR. I know you put out a cassette LP "All Creatures Great and Eaten", but that was an entirely self-financed affair, right? What else happened between then and now?

"Bill, let me give you the condensed version: After the release of the "For Our Dead" EP I fired Phil Hampson from Nuclear Death and took over my original place as guitarist, bass player and vocalist. As well, Wild Rags Records and Richard C were quite literally fucking us over. So Steve Cowan and I decided to fire Richard and release "All Creatures Great and Eaten" ourselves. This album became so well received as the months continued that we decided to permanently stay a two-piece affair. Steve and I then created our own label, Cats' Meow Records - exclusively for Nuclear Death alone - and we took a couple years and built our very own recording studios - The Cats' Meow Digital Recording Studios. During the building time we composed the basic music, and I finished the story for our fourth and now available album "The Planet Cachexial". This album will be our first on compact disc!"

So, have you secured a deal for the release of your fourth album? Is there a label in existence that you feel would market ND to the best of their abilities, a label you could trust after your experiences with Wild Rags?

"We are remaining true to our art and in doing will be releasing all forthcoming Nuclear Death material on our own label. This way we do everything, there are no middlemen leeches to deal with, and our listeners will get the highest quality product we can muster! Bill, I am sure once you listen to "All Creatures..." and especially "The Planet Cachexial" you will agree... We do best on our own!"

How did Nuclear Death survive the departure of Phil Hampson? He was credited with all music/lyrics, as well as creating the Nuclear Death 'concept' artwork... Surely it's a very different band from that which recorded the first two classic albums?

"Firstly, let me alert you to the fact that he and Richard C worked together to scheme me

out of getting credit for lyrics and music as well as Joel and later Steve Cowan! If you notice on "For Our Dead", I did the artwork and the band as a whole are credited with the music and lyrics. I remain the artist/designer for our last and present album covers."

"Nuclear Death will always survive because the band and its conceptual endeavours were birthed and created by me, Laura Bravo. So, I guess when I die so shall Nuclear Death!"

Obviously the insane speeds at which you play have become very characteristic of Nuclear Death, and something we have come to expect from the band. Do you find this limits you at all?

"We knew we were in danger of becoming typical so we put out "All Creatures..." to stifle the old guy. Now, with "The Planet Cachexial", we know Nuclear Death can only move forward... possibly into a separate continuum... I think aliens have taken over my mind!"

Whereas some of the stuff on the first LP was actually kinda catchy ("The Colour of Blood" and "Fetal Lament"), with "Carion..." Nuclear Death often descended into the realms of total fucking chaos! Do you think, now, in 1995, Nuclear Death still provides a balance between the two?

"Bill, all I can ask is that you listen to "The Planet Cachexial" and read the story that comes with it, Slumberblood, upon which the album is based, and then it will all become quite crystal clear..."

What do you feel is your strongest material anyway? Do you find the old demos, etc. are still wholly representative of where Nuclear Death is coming from today?

"NO! Those tapes were me trying to find our voice. I would say the Nuclear Death that I have always heard inside my head and wished for in my nightmares has finally

surfaced... You can hear the true Nuclear Death on "The Planet Cachexial". Orchestrated, haunting and uniquely ND!"

At some point in the early nineties Nuclear Death was rumoured to have started some kind of campaign against Wild Rags. Is that true, and if so, what did you hope to achieve by it? I mean, weren't you quite glad that WRR gave you the opportunity to put out records in the first place?

"I never trusted Wild Rags. Honestly, the reason why we signed with Richard is because no other label would give us a pot to piss in, really! People, and especially labels, cannot handle what they cannot understand... we have always been quite ahead of our time musically and we just couldn't get a deal!"

"Yes, Richard Rags bit the line and we milked them for all we could, but his involvement was ulterior from the start. He is infamous for luring green bands into signing up with him and then he basically keeps royalties and continues to sell merchandise by making cheap copies of the bands' tapes. This way he can make money, and the bands can keep getting hung up on and/or disconnected!"

"We felt that along with the scores of other bands he has burned - Hellwitch, Sadistic Intent, etc. - he should be exposed for what he is: a lazy, two-bit record store dealer with unsavoury motives, a scheming "label" and a fraud manuscript a mile long! I do have to "thank" him for one thing, though: the experience we survived taught us never to trust anybody and got the fire under our ass to start our own label!"

One of the things which made Nuclear Death stand out from all others, besides your vocals, was the immense sickness and perversion which emanated from each album's lyric sheet. Can you tell us about some of the tasteless topics which are discussed on the forthcoming album?

"Well, "Cachexial..." is based around a short story I wrote entitled Slumberblood. It is our first conceptual endeavour and is definitely our finest achievement... artistically speaking, of course. The album revolves around an aeons-old planet and its perverse inhabitants. The story is actually written like a screenplay and may well be... we expect it to become a film in the future."

"Some of the gruesomely gregarious characters include: the Wiengd, Mother Chaos, Slumberblood, the Overseers and the Zyreytyians. It is music to listen to in the dark!"

Lastly, what do you think of the underground scene as it is today? Are there any bands you particularly enjoy?

"Honestly, I am quite uninformed underground-wise. I like Chris Reifert's new band Abscess, I hear Deceased are at work on another album, but I get more mail from individuals who are seeking something different to listen to and hence write us in hopes of fulfilment. I also correspond with fellow poets like Canada's majestic surrealist Daniel King and Miss Keri O'Shea, who is a terrific, imaginative poet! I find exchanging of words to be much more fulfilling than tape-trading. Most of the music I get all sounds the same - boring, typical death metal with awful sound and third rate lyrics. Being a writer myself, I suppose I am

highly critical, but I can spot talent in its rawest forms, literally speaking. If one has a gift for eloquence and the written word I find it quite easily spotted, no matter how rough."

"I suppose I am saying that I enjoy artists of all walks and realms, and the typical and very mundane scene of the underground literally leaves me famished and uninspired. I look to people such as you, Bill, to keep the "magic" happening and flowing through the underground. After all, Nuclear Death has always inhabited the deepest of sewers, no matter how lysergic our music becomes!"

Nuclear Death Merchandise

"The Planet Cachexial" LP (on compact disc only; includes 8" x 11" story book) \$12 (US) \$14 (elsewhere)

"All Creatures Great and Eaten" LP (available in cassette format only) \$10 (US) \$12 (elsewhere)

"For Our Dead" EP (available on cassette format only) \$7 (US) \$9 (elsewhere)

Nuclear Death two-sided white T-shirt (contains logo on both sides - available in extra large only) \$15 (US) \$17 (elsewhere)

Nuclear Death logo stickers \$1 with order; \$2 without order (each additional sticker \$1)

Artwork from "The Planet Cachexial" by Laura Bravo (8" x 11" full colour prints, signed by the artist and laminated. Three to choose from - "Slumberblood on Cachexial", "Raped by the Wiengd", "Grimalkin be Spoiled") \$8 (US) \$10 (elsewhere) each, \$20 (US) \$22 (elsewhere) all three.

Nuclear Death, PO Box 43424, Phoenix, AZ 85080-3424, USA.



STEVE COWAN



LAURA BRAVO





Whilst on my travels in Ireland last summer I came across a hunched and crooked old man sitting smoking a long pipe by the side of the woodland path. Having hopelessly lost my way, I quizzed him as to the whereabouts of the nearest inn. The gruffly muttered directions which he gave me were vague and my sense of direction impaired by the unfamiliarity of the Emerald Isle, but after what seemed an eternity I finally arrived at an ancient tavern. As I heaved open the heavy oaken door my attention was immediately drawn to a figure hunched over a jar of mead by the fireplace. Sensing a presence, he looked up abruptly and beckoned me over. As I moved towards him a log in the smouldering grate burst into flames and lit up my peculiar host's face. To my astonishment it was none other than Alan Averill (aka Naihmass) of Primordial! Having congratulated him on an excellent demonstration cassette and the recording contract this had won him with Cacophonous Records, I sank back into a comfortable armchair and proceeded to make pleasant conversation with him, the results of which you are about to read...

What has been happening in the Primordial camp since you released the "Dark Romanticism..." tape two years ago?

"Writing and recording the album, mostly. There has been a fair bit of delays, as we recorded it eight... nine months ago. Maybe seven - I don't even know what month it is now! Anyway, we've just been waiting for Neil from Cacophonous to get the artwork ready, but it should be out at the start of the month of August. Then we'll be set for world domination, ha!"

How does your new material differ from that on the demo? Is it 'artier', more obscure?

"I don't know... when we were writing new songs from the demo to the album we found that the songs were a lot darker and they flow a lot more. They're a continuous stream of dark subconscious, whereas on the demo a lot of the music is a lot more accessible to people who don't necessarily like black metal or whatever. A lot of people just into whatever are liking it because musically it's quite melodic. The new stuff is melodic, but it's melodic in a different way. It's more... I suppose sinister, dark, malign. It just has a lot more feeling in it, a lot more passion, a lot more lust, a lot more emotion. I don't know whether it'll be ultimately accessible to a lot of people that liked the demo, but I'd say if they really did get some sort of pure feeling out of it they'll get the point."

Do you sound more 'Irish', if you like, now?

"People write to me and they say "Oh, you're an Irish band, you're obviously Celtic" and stuff. It's all very well to say that, but ultimately we consider the Irish thing to be less blatant than most people seem to think. We're more Irish than bands that rip off Irish folk music or whatever. It's all very well to do that and just listen to old tapes of late seventies folk bands, but we prefer to be more personal about it. There is bodhran, flute, tin whistle, mandolin... but only in one song. All the rest is metal. I think we will head more in that direction in the future, but I think people get the wrong idea when instantly they presume that because we're

Irish everything is all Celtic influences. I mean, I'm descended from the Celts, roughly speaking, and I'm very much into Celtic culture, ethics and life codes, et cetera, but at the end of the day I'm not a fucking Celt! I'm into - shall we say - more sinister things than that which revolve differently around in the music. To assume that the music is instantly Celtic music just because we're Irish is wrong, but there is a definite Celtic influence."

Do you think that is something automatic or is it something you have to force out?

"You do tend to pick up on it. I mean, I was always interested in Celtic culture in school or whatever. I always used to study it and read books and stuff. The ultimate feeling is when you're just alone in nature and you realise that the scene you're in hasn't changed in thousands of years and you realise that this is the way it's always been and perhaps it'll never change, and perhaps this is the way I would have been several thousand years ago. For me that's the ultimate feeling, along with the poetry, the culture, the warrior ethics and so on. Personally speaking, I think I can mix that with the more Satanistic things I'm into. From a European stance on Satanism I think it's okay to be something more sinister but to have roots and links in old culture. I'm proud of our Pagan heritage and our Pagan past. I'm not proud of the way the country is now, but in a modern sense I've been into the more sinister things since before I was in Primordial. Just because being Pagan and Celtic is trendy it doesn't mean I'm going to change, you know? It's what I've always been and what I always will be."

'Tis a well known fact that the Celts had strong connections to the Vikings. Do you

find yourselves at a bit of an advantage in that respect compared to, say, an English black metal band?

"Definitely, 100%! The Celts dwelt in Norway before the Vikings and before they moved south west towards our area of the world. I dunno... I mean, I always found black metal to be somewhat strange to be associated with England. I've never thought England had any mysticism associated with

it. It's different... I mean, I could never associate any real mystical type black metal with England. People think of England and they don't think of black metal, whereas with Ireland because there are no bands signed and because it's a lot more of an obscure country... I mean, people obviously think of the IRA and stuff, but also when they think a bit more about it they think of mysticism, mystical things, Pagan and Celtic associations. It's not that we play on that, but I think when Cacophonous come to try and sell the record they will find it quite easy to sell because we're not another Norwegian band and we're not another Swedish band. We're an Irish band and the music is not typical black metal, but it's done in an Irish way, which is good because it's different. It's different even to the English way, you know?"

Have you found yourselves being more readily accepted in Norway precisely because of the similarity in heritage? I've read nice things about you in Norse 'zines...

"Yeah, that's what I've found. It's strange, but Primordial is quite popular in Norway, whereas similar bands of a similar stature from other parts in the world would not get even looked at in Norway. Why I'm not sure... maybe it has something to do with the fact that in interviews I don't come across as your average *Hail Transylvania, Hail Satan*, spikes, leather, etc. black metallor - that's all a whole load of 'shit, y'know? I think a lot of people don't know any bands from Ireland, and if they do all the bands from Ireland are different. None of us sound like each other even remotely. Cruachan and us don't sound the same, TSB and Morphosis don't sound the fucking same, so as yet there is no real influx of black metal bands who are trying to rip off other bands and ultimately we have a

hand over bands from Norway and Sweden."

There seems to be an increasing amount of bands from, say, America singing about the Vikings, etc., and I for one find this difficult to accept. Do you feel the same way?

"In a way I do, because America has no history, no culture... no Pagan history. It's a bastard country. I could understand if maybe Indians were making black metal or something... No, you're right. It has no culture, no Pagan history. For me the only thing that's inspiring for black metal is H.P. Lovecraft. Black metal doesn't have to be Pagan or something rooted in Paganism, though..."

Yeah, but even so it is a very European thing, don't you think?

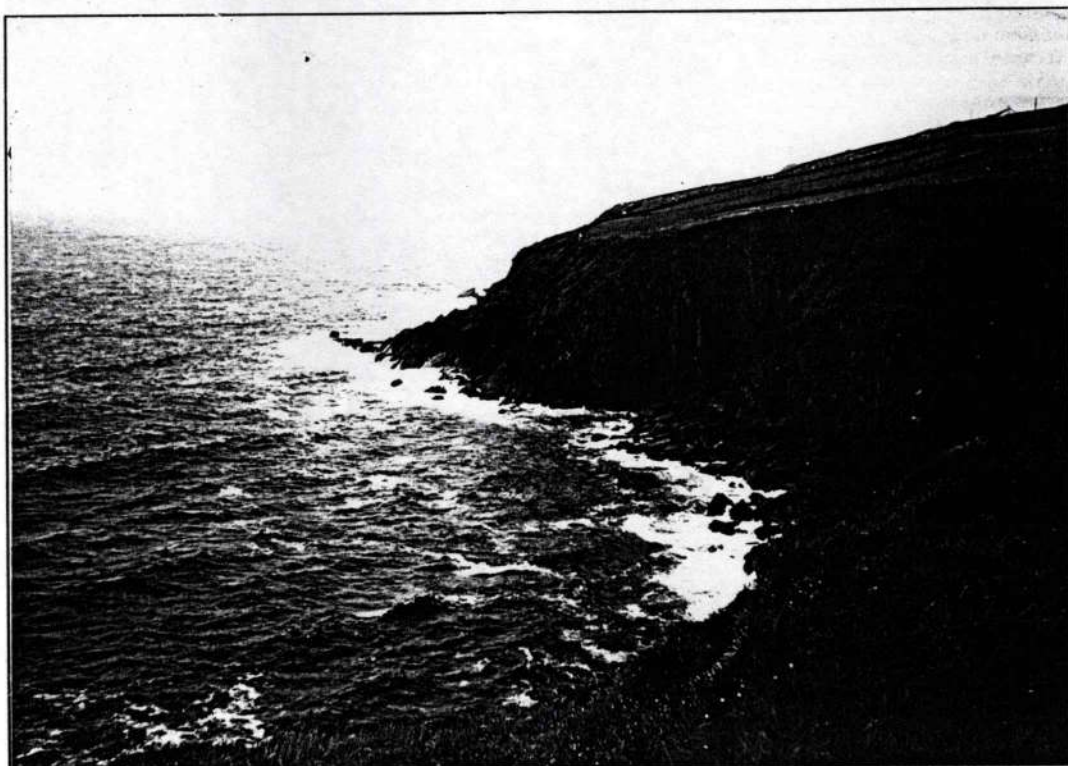
"Definitely, 100%! Everything is just European. The only bands that even come close from America is old Slayer and Possessed. I just don't like American bands and I don't particularly appreciate - in general - their attitude. I find it difficult to handle, but then you've got to look at Blasphemy, who are just brutal black metal, and they don't give a fuck!"

Order From Chaos are great...

"Order From Chaos is an immense band! Grand Belial's Key are okay, but I do know what you mean. You get demos from bands Australia, etc. and they're talking about Vikings and northern things and northern that, and it's just a load of shit! I had a demo from this band called Enthroned and they have a song called "Rites of the Northern Full Moon", and you're wondering what people from Belgium are doing writing about Vikings and stuff... They have a culture of their own, European culture, so why do they have to write about fucking Vikings?! I guess it's just the fact that Norwegian black metal broke through in 1993 and everybody has just kissed their ass since then, y'know?"

Do you think things have calmed down slightly since then? Looking at bands like Fleurety, Ulver, Gehenna, Arcturus, In The Woods... and Ved Buens Ende, it would appear that progression is the name of the game nowadays.

"Well, I think that a band like Tiamat with "The Astral Sleep" really set the scene for this kind of experimental stuff. Personally speaking, I became uninterested in death metal as soon as Stockholm and Morisound took hold. I just searched for bands that were striving for their own originality and I think



that black metal will survive a long time, if under different auspices. There are so many different bands you can call black metal. Of course there are hundreds of generic bands, but then you have people like Ulver and Gehenna pushing the boundaries still further and getting more experimental. As far as I'm concerned today, people in general aren't interested in listening to just total brutality, although the odd time it's the coolest thing on the face of the earth. In general they're interested in listening to something that reflects their passions and emotions and their lusts, and for me black and darkwave bands are making the best music on the planet, bar none. The constrictions that held the scene in 1988/89/90 are gone. You have black metallers playing in bands like White Willow from Norway, which is total prog-rock/folk music, but even still a lot of black metallers listen to it. Something like Arcturus... that couldn't have existed in 1988. "Into the Pandemonium" was scorned in '87. When they played with Kreator in England they were spat off the stage! When I first heard it I thought it was genius, but these people were like "Fuck, it doesn't thrash!", you know? All the constrictions are gone and things can only really get better, but I also think that all the generic shit bands will disappear in the eventual future years. Like we're seeing with death metal, the hierarchy will remain."

Mmm, indeed. It's almost like the dm scene has been cleansed of everyone who didn't really have anything to say in the first place and therefore completely reborn...

"Yeah, I totally sense that. I became pissed off with death metal as soon as all the Napalm Death fucking social life values appeared. That's not death metal; death metal is about *death*! That's why it's called *death* metal, and I still love Necrovore, Grottesque, Incantation... even fucking Treblinka or Sarcophago. That was death metal, not fucking black metal or anything. Old Mayhem... they were called death metal and stuff. It's not about life shit! I just got out of death metal when all this life code social shit started invading the scene. I think it was good, though, in a way, as when death metal turned into such a farce all the people who found the scene such a joke moved onto something else. That's when black metal just rose and it was something to supplant all the *shit* death metal. Admittedly, there's a lot of *shit* black metal going about, but when I started off trading and sending to bands in 1988/89 there were, like, ten black metal bands on the planet. In '90/91 there still wasn't so many, but it took over from all the stupid death metal and hopefully bands like Napalm Death or Gorefest or whatever will die, because that's not what death metal is about at all. I've been into death metal for many years and it's not like I became black metal all of a sudden and said *Oh I don't like death metal anymore... I fucking love death metal still!*"

Technology... do you see it playing an increasingly important role in the music of the future? I mean, already a lot of people have started to pick up on it. Arcturus, again, being a prime example.

"I dunno... I mean, I've always been very into Tangerine Dream, Klaus Schultze; electronic music from the seventies and stuff. For me something like Arcturus is just a logical extension of the kind of darkness found in something like Tangerine Dream albums like "Phaedra". I don't know about technology, really. We'll always stay a primal fucking band! That's why it's called Primordial - it's primordial music that taps into the primordial senses of people. The only technology I see is if I go into a studio and look at all the buttons and say "What the fuck is all this shit?!" I can't see any kind of techno black metal or anything. I just totally appreciate bands like Venom because they're so primal. If people call themselves heavy metal fans basically they're into heavy metal and what they want is fucking guitars, a bass, fucking drums and vocals in your fucking face to head-bang to... At the same time, though, I really do appreciate bands like Emperor who

have brought a more classical, atmospheric tone to their music."

Now that you mention Emperor, do you think the overwhelming success their LP has met with is doing black metal any good? For a musical genre that a lot of people feel should be kept underground, seeing ex-Obituary shirt wearers clad in "Nightside" tops must be pretty off-putting...

"In my honest opinion Emperor shouldn't have to answer for their art. Emperor create, they don't say who should listen to the music and who shouldn't. Let's be honest, people are fucking ignorant and stupid and there's a fair amount of them who listen to Emperor. There's nothing Emperor can do about it.

you reach one person who understands Primordial in every thirty who buy the record well then it's worth fucking selling that thirty, because if you reach none and only sell, like, ten you might as well sell thirty. Do you know what I mean? I don't have any preconceptions that Primordial will sell this amount or that amount. I know Cacophonous think we'll sell a lot of records because we can play live out, which is quite rare for a black metal band. I don't think people should have to answer for their art or say who should or shouldn't listen to it. In 1987/88 you *had* to send away for the records, whereas now you can buy them in the shops, but that's just what happens... It happened with doom metal and death metal as well, it's what happens to

get something out of what you felt when you were making it, and if they do then that's all the reason for making it."

Do you have many gigs planned? I thought there was a tour lined up as well.

"We had planning a tour for the end of this month, but because the album was so much delayed we didn't get to go out on tour. We had potential tour-mates in Moonspell, Occult, Rotting Christ... bands like that, but generally the thing with touring is not something Cacophonous organise. You come to them and tell them what you want to do and they'll put up the money for it. It's just the ultimate thing to play out for, like, a month or a month and a half. It doesn't matter whether you're playing in front of ten or four hundred people. It's just playing out, you know? I'd say we'll be out on tour sometime early next year, that is if the band still exists..."

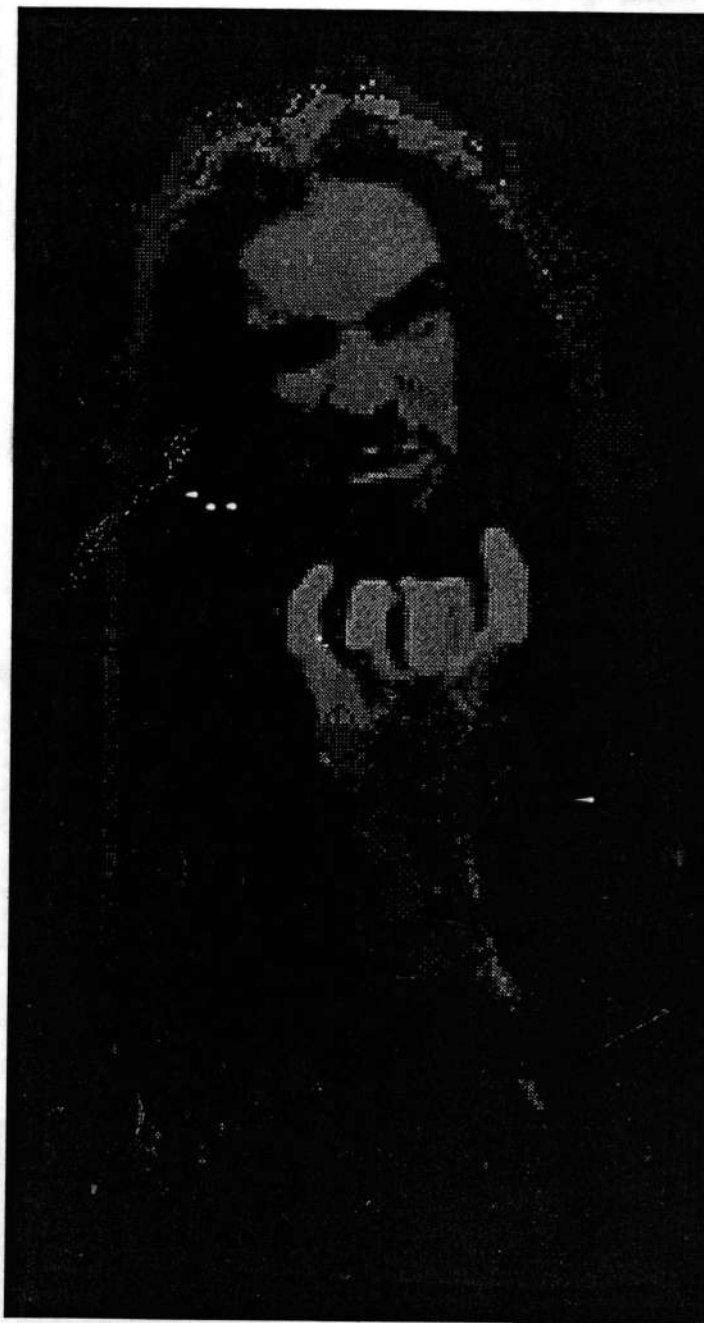
When you do tour, would you go out with Cradle Of Filth?

"I hope not, I fucking hope not! I don't mind Bal-Sagoth, but not Cradle Of Filth. I don't know how they'd even get into the tour bus, their heads are so big! Ah fuck Cradle Of Filth, they're not even worth talking about. They're not the be-all-and-end-all of black metal; there's millions of black metal bands better than they are. It's just death metal with keyboards and screamy vocals, you know? Crush the false Metal motherfuckers! It doesn't matter what it is... death metal, doom metal, black metal, speed metal, blah blah blah... it doesn't matter, it's just heavy fucking metal, and if you don't understand the basics of that you can fuck off! I don't know, I'd like to do a tour... we were meant to go to Norway, but we'll see what happens."

Okay, that's just about it I think. Anything in particular you'd like to finish up with? How's about some nasty rumours?

"Death to motherfucking wimp-ass false Metal! Death to everything! Hail and Kill blah blah blah... listen to Manowar, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Venom, Celtic Frost. Come and see Primordial, come up to the front and bang your fucking head! Make a fucking heavy metal sign, you know? It's not as if we're trying to be evil or anything... You are what you are, you know what you are and if you're not what you say you are you know you're not what you say you are deep down! Just come to the front and fucking head-bang - it's as simple as that! All I can say is check out the album and I hope you won't be disappointed. Trends, image, etc. don't matter, it's music that matters and ultimately I have things that are personal to me, but they are personal. I don't go saying what people should believe or anything! Just listen to Primordial and if you feel anything off the music then you've touched the naked darkness and that's what it's all about... What's a good quote to end the interview with? Oh yeah, *We're gathered here tonight to heed the metal command...* that's a good one. Exodus! If anyone wants to write to me they'll have to send a pound or an IRC... something like that because otherwise they won't get a reply - it's as simple as that! I have too much mail and I get too much begging Jew-bag begging fucking Jew-motherfucking-bag letters, so I can't answer every one, y'know? Oh yeah, here's some anti-Fenriz rumours for you ... Fenriz DJs in a techno club in Oslo. He wears shiny silver trousers and has purple hair and he really is a false metal motherfucker! Ancient wear wigs, don't support Ancient! Look on their album and he wears a wig! Diamanda and Antoinette went to the guy's house and he has Motley Crue and Skid Row posters on their walls. I'll kick his ass, kick his motherfucking ass! Don't buy that shit! Fenriz is a fucking techno-wimp! I tell you, I'll kick his motherfucking false metal ass when we go to Norway!"

Primordial c/o Alan Averill, 22 Station Road, Sutton, Dublin 13, Ireland.



They just create, they create for themselves and not for your average little fucking fifteen year old with an Obituary shirt to suddenly go out and buy an "In the Nightside Eclipse" shirt. To be honest, I don't give a fuck anymore! I used to write to Samoth when he was doing Embryonic, when he was playing fucking death metal. It's just a logical progression and no one can say that Emperor are fashion-jumpers because their music is just so immense that it transcends boundaries of trendiness or whatever. I don't think artists should have to answer for their art. If Primordial sells 30,000 records or if it sells 5,000 records it doesn't really matter. The music is the same, you're just relying on people's inherent ignorance and stupidity. If

any scene. Because black metal is so extreme spiritually, musically and whatever people automatically have a go at it, but they don't say the same thing about death or doom metal anymore, y'know? It does piss you off when you see these little wankers, but I don't really give a fuck. I don't give a fuck *who* buys our record - it doesn't bother me. Even if it did bother me there would be nothing I could do about it. Why lose sleep over it? If you're going to be like Darkthrone and say "We won't play live because our fans wouldn't understand us" then don't fucking release records! Stay in your bloody rehearsal room and play to yourself! The ultimate egotism, though, of actually making music is so that somebody else will listen to it and perhaps



Retro death and black metal seems to be the thing these days, what with the likes of Divine Eve (now Crimson Relic), Order From Chaos, Pentacle, Carpathian Forest, Absu, etc. all harking back to the mid-eighties musically. Seldom, though, does a band come as close to recreating that old vibe as the Australian foursome Gospel Of The Horns. Indeed, so enthused was I by their 1994 demo "The Satanist's Dream" that I had an interview together for vocalist/spokesperson Shane Transvaal D. hours after of hearing it.

G'day! Just how wintry is a Queensland winter and does it snow at all down-under? What's playing on your stereo?

G'day to you, Gregory. The Australian winter is wintry enough for me. Contrary to foreign belief, Australia is very cold in winter, but not as cold as Europe, and yes, it does snow in Australia but just not where I live. As to what I'm listening to as I type out my answers, it's one of my all time fave CDs, The Cranes - "Loved". Fucking Excellent!

Who the fuck are Gospel Of The Horns? A brief history lesson please.

"Oh, history is so boring when it concerns bands, don't you think? (Yes, but I doubt most readers would have minded, seeing as yours is one of the least known in this issue - Ed) So why must I be asked this question so much then? It really is not interesting, no killings or such, so onto the next question please."

I say Venom, Sodom, Frost, Destruction and Motorhead...

"And I say we are inspired bands and more but we are not influenced by them."

You reckon? I beg to differ... Anyway, at least your taking your cue straight from the originals, which is more than can be said for most of today's ten-pence blasphemers. Do you think it's this nostalgia that makes Gospel Of The Horns different, something else or nothing at all? Maybe being different isn't one of your top priorities anyway...

"Of course being different is important to us, we don't wish to sound or look like anyone else. I think what sets us apart from other bm bands is the way we approach our music and our lyrics. Personality-wise we are vastly different from our bm brothers as we don't pretend to be so misanthropic all the time. We are serious about our music, our look and our stage presence but when we're away from that we are just normal people except that two of us are practising Satanists."

You're not from Europe, so how difficult has it been to establish yourselves both at

home and abroad? A lot of people feel that black metal is purely a European thing, as the true spirit (whatever that is) just isn't there anywhere else...

"What a crock of shit! What makes the Europeans so different from us Australians so that we don't have "the true spirit"? If you look at our bm scene you will see one of the strongest bm scenes world-wide. We all sound different from each other and we certainly don't plagiarise the European sound like they do themselves! Don't get me wrong, I like most European bands, but I don't consider them to be above myself and my band. We have established ourselves both here and overseas by playing music that is mostly original."

Point taken, but don't you think having song titles like "Land of Ancient Forests" is pushing it a little, considering the attitudes mentioned above?

"Land of Ancient Forests" is an old song and it mainly deals with a forest close to my home, but it also deals with the Dracula story

and the Carpathian mountains in Romania that I was so fascinated with at the time I wrote the lyrics. The lyrics on the demo we aren't all that concerned about now. The newer poems (as I like to call them) deal with various dark subjects from human sexuality, mind expansion through the use of drugs, rebirth of spirit and my spiritual Satanism."

GOTH (is that abbreviation intentional?) is one of many bands looking back to the eighties for inspiration these days. What's the appeal? Is it purely nostalgia or simply the fact that everything conceivable has been done to death in the current metal scene? Is originality as important to you as character as a listener?

"So many questions in one, I like that... As for GOTH, the abbreviation is not intentional, it's just that when you abbreviate our name down it forms the word goth. Our guitarist, Hell Butcher, writes all the music and he only listens to the old bands. He hasn't even heard bands like Enslaved or Immortal and the bands that he has, such as Cradle Of Filth, he hates with a passion. I wouldn't say he looks back for that inspiration, then, as it's there in his heart. Nostalgia is defined in the dictionary as "longing for the return of past events" and that is certainly not what we are striving for! We are forging our own future so why would we want to be stuck in the past? Yes, our music is not the most original style of bm but we twist that with our ideas, which in turn makes us original in our own way, if that makes any sense. What I look for in a band as a listener is simply good music and intelligent lyrics, be that they are original or not."

Me too, but these days it seems that image comes before music a lot of the time. Do you value corpse paint and the associated paraphernalia?

"No, not really. We sometimes use it, mainly on stage, but I really couldn't give a fuck if we use it. I'm mainly drunk when I use it. When we use it we only use black around our eyes like the old days, no white at all. That way it looks meaner."

Tell us about your fanzine. Are you a keen reader yourself? If so, which are your favourite mags and which influenced you in creating your own?

"First off, yes, I am a keen fanzine reader,

it's the only way to find out about newer underground bands. Hmm... I used to be the main editor of Sombre Eve but then my other editor decided to move to the UK so out of friendship for her I let her take it over but our once great friendship has turned sour for many reasons, none of which I wish to express here so I now have nothing to do with it. We released 4 issues. As for the future of SEZ, I have no idea. I've just started to compile my new 'zine, Among the Wolves at Dawn. It (the first issue) will be out around Sept/Oct. If anyone wishes to know more, then write to me. My fave 'zines are Key of Aloer, Descent and Decompozine. None of which were around when I first started out on Sombre Eve, which was in '91/'92. No other 'zine influenced SEZ."

You once worked for Dark Oceans Productions, but you told me you'd split. Why was this and do you have any plans to start a label of your own?

"As my ex-partner is a rip-off! I was getting abusive letters and phone calls accusing me of ripping people off when in fact I had never dealt with these people. Also, because I was supposed to be an equal partner yet he signed all these crap bands without consulting me at all. I now have started my own label, Empire of Fire. I have a few EPs on the way, so look out for them."

Australia seems to have an extremely healthy metal scene. Is it a relatively exclusive one like the UK's where people tend to support purely domestic bands or vice versa? Does being virtually cut off from the happening world-wide metal scene affect people's attitudes, so you think?

"Good question once again. I'd say our scene is completely different to yours as we get next to nothing tour-wise here in Australia. We've had about 7 proper metal bands tour here thus far and you would be able to see that many bands in the UK a month. What makes it hard for bands to tour in Australia is that we are so far from Europe and the USA and once they are in Australia it is just as hard to tour as each city is so far from each other, about 12/15 hours from one to another. The scene is piss-poor for local bands. About 200 approx. come to see local bands yet when an overseas band tours you get about 1000, which pisses me off no end. No, our scene is just as prone to trends as



The Gospel Rockers themselves in April '95 (from left to right): Blackfire, sorry... Hell Butcher, Vultone and Transvaal.

anywhere else in the world. I can count all the good bands on both hands. Too many people here want to act just like the Norwegians, which is pathetic. We have our own identity, why duplicate theirs? Who really gives a fuck? I don't!"

What you must give a fuck about, though, is the amount of Christian bands in Oz. Are there ever any problems at metalists when, say, Mortification and Sadistik Ekektion are on the same bill?

"Ha ha! We don't have any metal festivals. And if we did you can bet no BM bands would play with Christian bands! I fucking hate these cunts, they're nothing but preaching inane twats! That's why I am proud of Australian BM bands that we don't preach and we are true to ourselves and what we sing about!"

Speaking of Christian bands, you guys also have Horde, right? Not exactly something for the Australian metal scene to be proud of...

"Urgh! This I'm not so proud of!!! How dare a Christian take the piss out of BM! Whoever he is he'd better keep his identity well guarded, but we think we know who he is and on behalf of the Australian BM scene I would like to say to our brothers of the worldwide BM scene that he will be dealt with."

I presume you have a life outside the underground, so what is there to do in your hometown Kedron?

"Absolutely nothing. Kedron is just a suburb, not a town or a city, and the only place of interest is the local cemetery which I visit very often. Well, during the week I work if I have any (I'm a part-time labourer) and I answer mail. On the weekends I usually go out on Friday night with my close friends and drink and when I can I spend the night with a female. On Saturdays it's much the same and I like to watch Australian rules which is a type of football. I hate soccer! On Sunday GOTH rehearse. That's basically it. Not very exciting, is it?"

Nope, but then neither is life here in Ayr. Finish off by giving us a rough idea of what the future holds for Gospel Of The Horns.

"The demo is still available for \$6 US. A MCD of the demo is out in August on Einstand Records of Italy. Shirts'll be for sale soon and we'll record our debut CD/LP later this year. Thanks to you, Gregory, I enjoyed your questions very much. Stay pure at heart. Ave..."

GOTH c/o Shane Transvaal D, PO Box 244, Kedron Q4031, Australia.

Editor's note: Tragically, the band split up a few months after this interview was conducted. Here's Mr Transvaal to tell you more...

"As of Sept MCMXCV, Gospel of the Horns has split due to musical and personal reasons. Most of the members wish to regret that we could not record our planned LP/CD before our split but we felt that it was best not to as it would not have been in our hearts, therefore making it an "untrue" recording if you will beg the use of such an inane word! As for each member, we are now involved with other projects, such as: Paimon - Destroyer 666 (I believe so), Hellbutcher - Vulgar and playing guitars for fellow BM band Spear of Longinus (live only), Vulture - Vulgar, and myself, Transvaal - I have 3 projects, being Dancers in the Savage Garden (gothic rock), an unnamed one with fellow BM person Shane of Abyssic Hate (melodic BM) and II Moons Apart (a more traditional BM band with female vocals as well). To close this statement, I'd like to thank all those who supported us in any way over the last 2/3 years. And a big fuck off to that wanker who reviewed our demo in Terrorizer - you should have knowledge of BM before you can be a critic of it!!!!"

Transvaal,

on behalf of all those in Gospel of the Horns.

etern e

shades of grey

Bollocks, I fucking hate doing this! Coming up with introductions for bands beyond definition, I mean. But then maybe some bands are best left undefined... Yeah, that sounds impressive enough. Nice and evasive too, so without further ado I'll hand you over to Ross, who interviewed Dave and Martyn from Eterne a year and a half or so before Candlelight released their debut CD "Still Dreaming"...

How has the response been to your demo "The Endless" and has it sold well?

Dave: "The response has been phenomenal! We really must express our gratitude to all those people who have supported us in some way. I think we've shifted almost 500 demos in only 6 months, which is great! Surprisingly enough, we've received only a handful of criticisms for a recording that had a lot of things that could have been considerably better, but it was only a demo after all and recorded on a tight budget. It did what it had to do."

How do you classify your sound? Which bands do you think have influenced it and what do you like listening to?

Dave: "I honestly cannot classify our sound although there have been several attempts made by others. I think my favourite has to be "despondent gothic horror" as it's relatively free from genericism, but even that's more than inadequate. As for band influences, I suppose the roots are in stuff like Black Sabbath, John Carpenter, Fields Of The Nephilim, Amebix, etc., but you can't really hear any of those bands in what we do. At the moment I'm listening to loads of different music including Lycia, Dead Can Dance, Grief, Skinflick Productions, The Whores Of Babylon, The Equinox Ov The Gods, Project Pitchfork, Eden, Divine Eve, Solstice, Emperor, Time Ghoul, Thergothon, etc."

Why did you change your name from Eldritch to Eterne? Does Eterne have any personal meaning?

Martyn: "Basically because quite a few ignorant, narrow minded people thought that by being called Eldritch we were ripping off The Sisters Of Mercy, whereas the name was chosen because it depicts darkness, atmosphere and mystery. As for the personal meaning of Eterne... that'd be telling!"

I guess you've not played any gigs with you being a two-piece until recently... Will you play live in future and if so, will your stage show involve anything special like effects, lighting, etc.?

Martyn: "We do plan to play gigs in the future and I suppose it depends what you mean by special. I mean, we will obviously play to the best of our ability and attempt to entertain, but at the moment our budget is not the healthiest creature on this planet."

What are your opinions on the UK scene in general? Which country do you think has the best scene?

Dave: "The UK scene is completely shit! I'm not saying that all the bands are crap, but the general attitude is appalling! Terribly conformist and also unbelievably arrogant! Then again, I couldn't really give a toss about these sad wankers, so I won't waste any more words on them. I don't think there's any one particular scene I favour. Each has its merits and its drawbacks..."

What are your lyrics about? Are they fact or fiction?

Martyn: "Birth, death and the bit in between. Dave and me have quite cynical

views and tend to write more about the more melancholy sides of things. Imagery-wise we are inspired by authors such as Anne Rice, Clive Barker and HP Lovecraft. Our lyrics are mainly fiction with a little bit of our feelings and frustrations hidden inside."

Dave: "I consider my own lyrics to be highly personal reflections of my own perspectives and interpretations. They may appear fictional, but there is always a deeper, subliminal message that is sometimes very difficult to discern, but it's there if you look."

Your next release will be a 7" on Hammer of Damnation Records. Is this run by the same guy as the Finnish 'zine of the same name? Details please.

Dave: "Yeah, Niko runs Hammer of Damnation as well. The material recorded on it completely destroys any of the demos as we had a larger budget than before. It should be out by the time you read this (so should the 1996 calendars - Ross) (how prophetic! - Ed). for \$5 from Hammer Of Damnation."

Have you finalised the deal with Candlelight Records yet? Is it a good deal and do you make a lot of money from it? Future releases on Candlelight? What do you think of the other bands on the label? Did you get any other offers?

Dave: "Yeah, everything's practically sorted out now and yes, it's an absolutely great deal. Lee doesn't treat his bands like your usual label and hasn't put any pressures on us whatsoever, which is how we like it. Naturally, our eventual financial gain depends wholly on how many records we sell so we'll have to wait and see how things turn out. There are some great bands forthcoming on Candlelight such as the Whores Of Babylon, Solstice, Arcturus, etc. Good individual music that doesn't bow down to pathetic fashions. As for other offers, yes, there were a few, but Candlelight offered us exactly what we wanted."

Tell us about the LP/CD.

Dave: "You'll have to wait and see! No, seriously, it should be around 65 minutes long on the CD version and about 50 on vinyl. The material is going to be very diverse, travelling through various moods and feelings rather than adhering to a single

monotonous style that'll get boring half way through. My favourite track to included is, I think, "Still Dreaming", which is a huge Cthulu-esque epic steeped in dormant mysticism and obscure melancholy. I love that song! There'll be a couple of guest musicians appearing throughout the album, so that should add an extra dimension. With any luck it should be out during February, so watch out for that."

Has your sound developed on the new material? How do you see it developing in the future?

Martyn: "It's definitely matured. I feel we will be varying more in the future as our equipment improves (i.e. new instruments) and we'll undoubtedly stretch our music's boundaries with each new song."

Do you think there is a possibility of you making a promo video or are they only for pop stars? Does it scare you to think of your face on MTV or something?

Martyn: "It may be a possibility if things go well. I don't see why pop stars should have all the fun, do you? It might be nice to see a video that has relevance to the song rather than some bloke thrusting his groin at the camera while some scantily clad women dance provocatively in the background (but then again perhaps not...). It doesn't scare me, but my face on a TV screen may scare some viewers as I resemble Cthulu's bottom and Dave looks like Nyarlathotep's saggy scrotum. A fearsome sight! I can tell you your sanity points will be lost!"

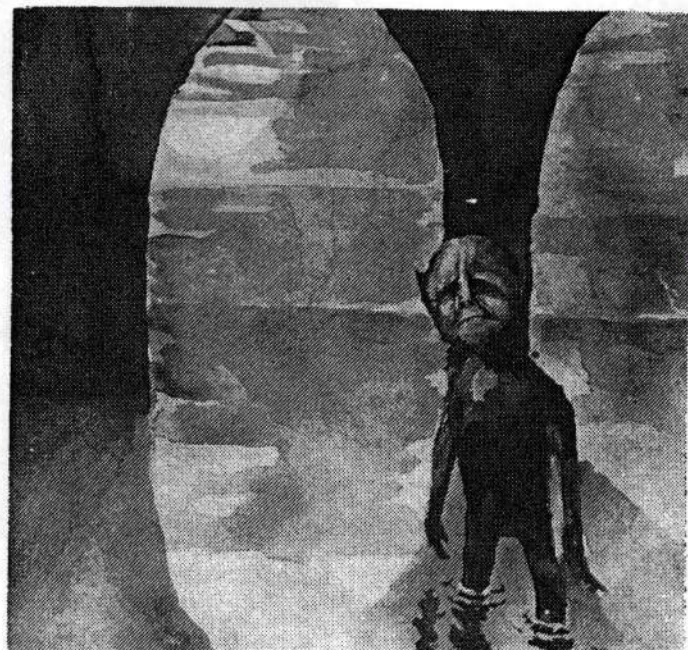
What is your favourite and least favourite release of this year and also of all time?

Dave: "My favourite release this year I think is "A Day in the Stark Corner" by Lycia. Its cold, depressive atmospheres are just so evocative and introspective it's almost totally consuming. My least favourite is, I think, "Icon" by Paradise Lost, which is a terrible disappointment, as I loved them until "Shades of Arse"... Never mind, I'm sure they'll make loads of lovely cash! My all time favourite release is a little more difficult to choose... there's too many to name! Maybe "Masters of Reality" by Black Sabbath. I don't know..."

Merchandise and last words?

Dave: "Well, the demo's no longer available, but the EP should be out now. Also, Candlelight will produce some T-shirts for us in '94, so keep an eye open for them. And of course our debut album. Thanks to Into the Woods for the interview, all the best with the mag!"

Eterne c/o Dave, 27 Elizabeth Street, Pentre, Rhondda, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales, UK.





trapped in purgatory

This one was done quite a while ago and was originally intended to appear in issue one. That of course was before my decision to drop everything that hadn't already been returned or typed to ensure a pre-Hogmanay release. Subsequently, some questions are a little less relevant than when they were first asked, but I'm sure you're used to that by now, Loyal Reader.

Anyway, Edge Of Sanity are one of my definite favourite death metal bands from Sweden, being both incredibly inventive songwriters and talented musicians. Four LPs and a mini album testify to that, and it was after playing the latest and greatest of these, "Purgatory Afterglow", to death that I got John Redfern to pass some questions onto his good buddy and all-round metal god Dan Swano for me.

Oh, and in case you're wondering, yes, this is the same interview as is printed in Kentucky Fried Afterbirth #1. John gave Grey a photocopy, assuming that I'd re-do it some other time. Fool! Never underestimate my laziness...

Hello Dan. How have you spent the week so far?

"Well, I started the week by recording Theatre Of Tragedy's debut CD for Massacre Records. That is what I have been up to all week since they have 15 days in the studio..."

Now, it's a well known fact that Unisound is currently Europe's most prosperous studio. Which projects are you working on at the moment and what is lined up for the rest of 1995?

"Thank you for that! I mean, it's pretty funny because the studio is not really that fancy if you look at the equipment and certainly not the surroundings. I guess I can only enjoy the success! I have done a few goodies in the past year, including Opeth (if only Candlelight could pay me, you'd hear the album of the decade!), Marduk, Ophthalamia, Novembre (Italy), Ghostorn (Lithuania) and I will soon do the solo album of mine, going under the moniker of Nightingale. I will also capture the debut of Sweden's darkest force Dark Funeral and also new CDs by Dissection and Godsend are planned."

Let's talk about "Purgatory Afterglow". It kills. How long was it in the making from beginning to end, i.e. from writing to post-production, and were there any problems along the way? What are your favourite tracks off it?

"Shit! My girlfriend is trying to hinder me in answering this interview, but I'll do my best to go on with it any way since I find it highly interesting... Rock on!!!"

"We started to plan for "Purgatory Afterglow" (PA) right after the release of

"The Spectral Sorrows". I always get a kick out of making all these endless interviews with the whole fucking universe. I think the first song to take shape was "Elegy", which we actually rehearsed on as a four-piece, I think... Then I started to collaborate with some really one dimensional and very back-to-the-roots (which we never had??) kinda stuff, sounding very boring, thinking of it with the result in hand. Then we had this JVC/Victor Japan deal coming up and Boss requested some material so that I could convince the high lads at JVC. I wrote "Until Eternity Ends" and "Eternal Eclipse" a few days before recording and then I realised that the songs I had done to date were pure crap, erased the whole album and started all over again. "Twilight" was the little baby where all the coolest riffs ended up. I actually tailor made the whole song after the second riff (the one where the vocals start to sound nasty) since I couldn't fit it into any other track. It had been all over the place in the wrong tempo and then it just fitted! I guess this sums up your cool question pretty good. We always write in different directions and all of a sudden the tracks kinda grow together at the top.

"My fave track is "Twilight" and I also like "Of Darksome Origin" where I show that I can be nasty as well. Oops, this turned out pretty long... Let's go on!"

Is EOS still a death metal band in your eyes? Too many people these days seem quick to deny their true roots, even though the term death metal covers a far wider area than before.

"We play music. I don't think we fit the death metal category anymore. This belongs to bands that are far more faithful to it than we are. I think we have only made one real death metal album ("Unorthodox"); the rest have been a bit weird and the first a bit thrashy. I hope we can come into a style where people can accept whatever we wish to do. I am pretty surprised that people actually didn't kill me after the Police cover. "Black Tears" is a fairly commercial outburst as well... The new stuff will hopefully be more accessible but still have the EOS trademark nailed to it."

Over the past couple releases you've displayed a degree of Entombedness, e.g. "Song of Sirens", "Blood", "Feeding the Charuatan", etc. Is this the new Edge Of Sanity or will you continue in the more atmospheric vein?

"Oh you're so right... This Entombedness, as you expressed it, is a little bit of a compromise between me and the rest of the guys that prefer the more nasty style. I would like the band to get more heavy and atmospheric and after explaining all this to Boss (head of Black Mark) I signed a great solo deal where I can bring out all my ideas. Check it out; it's released on the 3rd of April and called "The Breathing Shadows". A ghastly theme record that makes the King Diamond trilogy look like a lullaby!"

Pardon me for asking, but possessing (as I did at the time of the interview) only an advance tape of the album, I haven't the foggiest what your lyrics are about this time round. Enlighten the world!

"The lyrics for this one can be described in one word: Stuff to sing (that's three - Ed). The topics are not too original and the lyrics sound better than what they really mean. "Twilight" is based on a childhood memory where I imagine that all the fog is souls coming to the earth to dance upon the ground every night/day. "Of Darksome Origin" is some kinda apocalypse/holocaust bullshit.

"Blood-Coloured" is future kinda stuff. Holocaust based as well. "Silent" is about someone who's mute and instead of accepting it he kills people to somehow feel in control of his life. (Oh what a dodgy theme... Sorry!) "Black Tears" is suicide kinda shit. "Elegy" is a drug problem based suicide shit thingie. "Velvet Dreams": ??? "Enter Chaos" is about the US gun laws. "The Sinner and the Sadness" is some kinda story telling 'bout a priest who's killing and stuff in the name of God and gets all his sins forgiven, etc. "Song of Sirens" is holocaust kinda stuff (again! Fantasy?)."

"Of Darksome Origin" sounds quite similar to a lot of the black/death metal bands you've produced recently, what with the screamy vocals, etc. Pray tell more!

"Since Andreas/Dread once was the voice of Marduk and was a part of their classic line-up I felt like doing a song that was more in that vein and letting him split the vocals with me to prove to all new kids that Dread has the best black metal voice of all time! I don't see a big difference between this and for example "A Curfew for the Damned" off "Unorthodox"; we've always been this brutal."

Do you sometimes find it difficult to work with bands like Dark Funeral, Marduk, etc. due to their attitudes?

"I hate people who are always taking off their leather and studs to do a guitar take and then right after put them on again in an isolated studio because they have to be "black metal". It stinks assfuck!!! Some bands are nice, but these guys often have attitude problems. I don't give a fuck, I just mind my own business. They destroy themselves by being over wimpy black farts! Go home!"

Are you at all worried that Unisound could become as overused as Sunlight was in the early '90s? A lot of bands you've produced come away sounding near enough identical, but that can't be your fault entirely...

"Well, I guess if you compare stuff like Pan-Thy-Monium's "Dream II" to Unicorn's "Ever Since" or the new Marduk you would never hear anything similar. Sometimes it just happens to be out of my hands to create anything but a standard sound, purely due to lack of musicianship. Some people only use my kit, my amps and my pedals, and there you already have something in common."

"I like Sunlight and hate him for taking



Edge Of Stairway? From left to right (in case you can't read Dan's handwriting): Sami, Dan, Dread, Anders and Benny.



away the drums. This was his thing; the new drum sound is nothing near the classic power hits!"

"I always change a lot of gear like power amps, monitors and microphones to see where I have my sound. I am only at the experimental stage. I have only done this full time for 1 year, whereas Sunlight Skogis has been doing it since 1983! My time is to come..."

Ah, time. What a convenient link... Do you have much of it to spare? How's about a daily Swanschedule?

"My daily timetable, exclusive for The Crypt 'zine: Wake up at 09.00, often by the living alarm clock John (1 year old). Have a coffee breakfast and bike to work (10 minutes). Work between 10.00 and 18.00 without a break at Unisound (which I own and work there alone). Come home around 18.10, stay home and plink on the guitars, play with John and watch TV, do some mail and enjoy my girlfriend and then I go to sleep around this time (23.10). This is what 340 days of the year look like. The rest is minus the working!"

EOS have done some pretty odd covers recently, what with the Police song and "Blood of My Enemies". Any more lined up? How's about "Hey Jude"?

"I think we'll never do a cover version again because it is so fucking trendy. Anyway, if we could choose we'd do Uriah Heap - "Return of Fantasy" and "Gypsy", Greg Lake - "C'est la Vie" in goth-rock style and make some other hit, but I doubt it. Boss told me about a cover CD where all BMP bands do their all-time fave. I have an idea to make something short off some old Napalm Death record or the song "E" by Wehrmacht. It would be cool to go to Morrisound and record that piece; it lasts for 00:00:00:40 or something (0.4 seconds, that is)."

If Carcass asked you to produce their next album would you do it? What do you think of them nowadays? You know, major label contract, no gore, no big words, clean hair...

"I love the fact that Carcass have done this thing and still kept their harsh vocals. I think their sound is too fucking amazing; I barely believe the punch! With a better drummer they could go places! I would never produce their records since I would not know what to correct. I'd rather do the new Metallica, seriously!"

Right, this is where the interview gets a little weird... Tell us about your dreams if you can remember any.

"The most common nightmare is the one where the day is over at the studio and I stand outside the studio door locking up and some gang approaches me with guns and they have my girlfriend and my son hostage and force me to open up and then they just empty the whole studio with me watching. That is always waking me up, seriously! I have a lot of weird dreams. Another really horrifying dream was when I was going to the shopping place with my girlfriend and child. They were in the lobby and I had forgotten something in the car and was on my way out and saw some people messing around with some kinda bomb or whatever and all of a sudden it went off in the lobby and people flew out of the windows and everything just blew up and I felt the shock wave in the dream and it woke me up. I had a terrible headache and it took me hours to get back to sleep."

"My best dream is the living dream I am in at the moment. I would like to say that my dreams have come true: An extra special, twin-soul girlfriend, a wonderful, perfectly healthy son, a job that I love and shaped with my own hands that pays enough to have my girl back home with the kid and stuff. All my projects that I label serious have scored deals: Edge Of Sanity (Black Mark), Unicorn (Mellow), Pan-Thy-Monium (Osmose), Nightingale (Black Mark) and Subway Mirror (House Of Kicks). Ain't bad?"

No, it most certainly ain't! If only we were all so lucky. Anyway, how's about a profound philosophical statement on life, the universe and everything?

"The cover of PA describes my philosophy well. I believe that it's all a great circle going round and round. Maybe this is the 17th way round the circle. There are probably thousands of ice ages to follow when this civilisation has destroyed itself in a similar way to the others before us. When the purgatory stops to burn and all the living have been divided into their destinies it all starts all over again!"

Far out. Is there anything else you'd like to say before you go? Thanks for your time and all that...

"Shit, I'm tired as fuck. This interview stole all my creative energy... 1% left! I'd just like to say thanks for such a great and well thought out interview. It was well worth spending a rubber band and erasing ribbon on (he typed the answers, in case you were wondering - Ed). Send a copy please and enjoy life!"

Edge Of Sanity, Granvegen 26, 61236 Finspang, Sweden.



death metal bomb? eh?!

I'm a bit confused (now there's a revelation for you). No, seriously. What the fuck is death metal bomb? Is it perhaps a three ton hunk of steel with those immortal words written on the side? Is it an explosive substance made from the crushed and ground LPs of Suffocation and Autopsy? Or is it something else? Whatever it is, Tortharry from the Czech Republic have chosen to term their music exactly that, and so impressed was RIP 'zine editor Ross Sinclair with their 1993 demo, "Incriminated", that he sent guitarist and spokesperson Dan Pavlik a short interview.

So, what are your influences?

"In the beginning Sepultura and Slayer were. At present it's bands like Gorefest Carcass, Napalm Death, etc., but we are hunting our own style of course, so as not to sound like other death formations as usual."

Is it really important for Tortharry to be as original sounding as possible?

"Yes, for us this is the most important thing. We don't want people saying that we sound like Obituary. No, we are hunting our favourite Czech sound."

What does your band name Tortharry mean?

"Nothing, it's just a bunch of words."

Talk about your album, "When the Memories are Free" now!!

"It was out on the 12th September 1994 for a new and really great Czech label Tatra Records. It's called "When the Memories are Free" and it's on CD and MC. Till today we've sold a lot of copies and we have only a few left at home and at the record company. In Prague we were the 19th most selling title from all over the world in the autumn of 1994 in a shop for all kinds of music! The company Tatra Records is really great and I must say hello and thanks to the people there (mainly to Mirek Kovar - he also was a producer of the album)."

What do you think about death metal guys getting their correspondents to send their stamps back? I think this is a little natty!

"To return stamps is good for your next correspondence. Sometimes you can use the stamps once again, so all the correspondence is much cheaper. I also do this because if you want to appear in as many 'zines as possible you should write a lot of letters. To write and send them you need stamps and these cost money, and we are in a very big money deficit."

What happened to your record deal that you had with Tombstone? Are you happy with the present deal?

"I must say that I really believed in Tombstone Records. All the people around said to me that they are rip-offs, but today I don't even know how to think about them. It doesn't matter though, we never signed anything with them so... no problem. We have found a really great company and we are 100% satisfied there."

What's life like for young people in the Czech Republic? Do you have any thoughts on the massive rave/techno scene that is

currently sweeping the world?! Is the Czech Republic witnessing its popularity too?

"I can't write you about techno because I dislike it, so it wouldn't be honest of me to tell you about this style. Life here for young people is very good I think, only we could have a bit more money. I know tons of people that have come here from the USA, England, Sweden, etc. to study and all of them like our Republic a lot."

Further to our little question on the techno scene, I think all the females involved are fucking gorgeous - what do you think? What about heavy metal girls - love 'em or hate 'em?

"As I don't like heavy metal at all I can easily say that I don't like heavy metal women."

What future plans to you see for the band? Do you think you might ever tour with a bigger band one day? (Well, obviously if you tour with a band it ain't gonna last for one day!!)

"Our plans are simple: In January 1996 we'll record our second CD. Then we'll be on tour through Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Germany, Hungary and Switzerland. On the 14th of January 1995 we'll play at a Nuclear Blast fest in Prague with Benediction, Dismember, Hypocrisy and Meshuggah. I think that'll be okay. Then I'll be in Portugal for three months, so we'll not play until mid-May '95. In the summer of 1995 we'll be on tour with Temperance and Fertilizer (lucky you - Ed) and maybe Krabathor through Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Germany. In the autumn of 1995 we'll be preparing material for our second CD."

If I send you bucks will you get me a filthy hot magazine from your native land? Hope so!

"Of course, without any problems"

What are your favourite albums? Mention about five please! Are you able to say why you like them?

"Gorefest - "False" and "Erase": I just like them a lot. They are my favourite band. Death - "Human": My other favourite album and for me the best of Death. Carcass - "Necroticism...": Really cool and pathological, I like it a lot. Tortharry - "When the Memories are Free": I can't say I dislike the album, I love it. My favourite one till today from Tortharry."

Okay, thanks for the great answers!! Fancy hearing a tape of some Scottish bands? Have fun!!! Dan the man, Ross the floss!!!

"I never have listened to any Scottish group, but I hope I'll listen to some very soon. Thanks a lot for the interview and to Scottish people: Don't hesitate to buy things from the Czech Republic; their quality is really good now! We hope to sell as many CDs to Scotland as possible!"

Tortharry c/o Dan Pavlik, Cerveny Kostelec, Lhota 318 549 41, Czech Republic.

Editor's note: Due to Dan's understandably limited English I was forced to - shall we say - 'doctor' his answers a bit. Sorry 'bout that, but I'm sure no one will mind.

Opeth are a band that have travelled a long way during the last year or two. The obscure rehearsal tapes of dubious sound quality have evolved into a much celebrated 64 minute CD. Despite getting more widely known recently, these men have been jamming their fourteen minute hits since 1990. No demo was released - "We were always changing the songs" - but it would show that such was not needed either. Because Lee of Candlelight happened to receive an Opeth rehearsal tape from a certain Samoth, merely containing half a song if I am not wrong. This resulted in the debut album that was recorded at Unisound in the beginning of 1994. Well, Micke has always been available for interviews, so I threw a few questions at him.

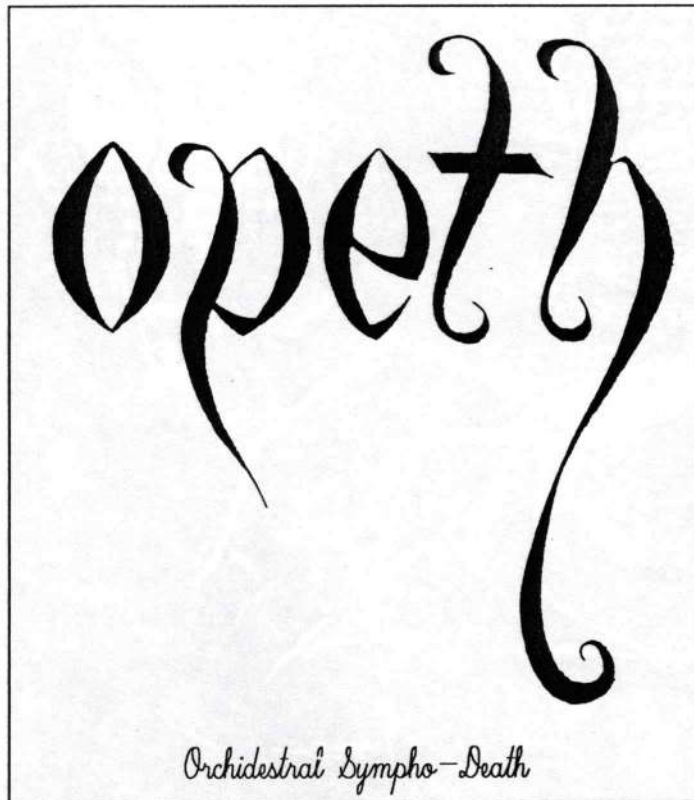
Good evening Micke. Exactly what is happening? How about quitting work and becoming a real rock star instead, who earns his living from the membership fees of the fan club?

"Good evening yourself, Timo! Rock star? Well not really, I guess I'll have to find me another job. Anyway, we're going into the studio in March for an entire month. That will entertain for a while in any case!"

Talking about rock stars, you certainly seem to have been one during your trip to England some months ago. The kids liked you, didn't they? By the way, you still haven't written that gig report you promised to do for Dauthus (Timo's 'zine - Ed).

"We did only three shows in the UK and they were all OK! We were overwhelmed from the response from the UK audience. But I do think that there were many people who heard us for the first time during our shows. We didn't have that much of a raving crowd, but each person really concentrated on listening to our symphonies which is most important for us. There were really many people coming up to me afterwards saying that we totally blew them away. There were people coming all the way from Ireland to see us which is truly flattering. About that report... ermm, in my natural habitat I am a bit lazy!"

Wasn't there anybody who complained about your long songs or did you hear any



criticism at all? If not, it would be a pity. Criticism can be very constructive...

"The only criticism I've seen regarding our show was in Kerrang where he wrote that we need more of a stage personality, and that is true! We're not a very experienced live act as yet, we need to develop a show along with our musical adventures."

Yes, the only shows I have heard about were first the one in Gothenburg in 1991, and then two early 1993 in Stockholm. The first of these latter occasions was together with a certainly suspicious Swedish band called Moahni Maohna - referred to as "camel rock" by a radio station I remember (one of Micke's fave bands, at least at that time!). I

was at this show and it was very interesting. The second show was like two weeks afterwards, together with Dismember and some four others, but I heard it was not very successful for Opeth. But back to this recent trip abroad - there the Stockholmian heroes were told about some English bands who seemed to like their music a little bit too much

Is not plagiarism the most honest way to pay tribute; how do you feel when you hear such copy bands? Perhaps it is not necessary for you to take it too seriously?

"I haven't actually heard the music of these bands, I've just heard that they are sounding very similar to our style. I find it more flattering than annoying, to tell you the truth."

I heard that you had influenced more established acts like Edge of Sanity too! Do you know what I am referring to?

"Well, I know that Dan is a huge Opeth fan, so that is possible. Although I must say that EOS have got a very personal sound! Speaking of Edge of Sanity... I helped them out with a few screams and a solo on their new CD! Honestly, that CD will be a pure fucking mind-blowing one!"

I was in particular referring to what I heard from a reliable source, namely that Dan & Co. had heard about your 19 minute song and decided to rip you off (with a pinch of salt of course) by doing a forty minute one! That is, there is only supposed to be one track on the upcoming album. Yes, it might be interesting to get to hear that piece.

As for this 19 minute song, called "Black Rose Immortal", will it be on your next album? You mentioned that your second album will probably "fill up the entire CD" - it most certainly will do if you use songs of such length... Please talk a little about this release; it will contain your most mellow song to date but it is still supposed to be harder than "Orchid". What do you mean "harder"? More muja-muja?

"Yes, 'Black Rose Immortal' will appear on our next CD! However, it won't be our most common live song due to its length. But I am sure that we will strike its tunes on some selected live occasion! That mellow song you mentioned is called 'To Bid You Farewell' and is somewhat a celebration of emptiness and sadness. But as you also said, the next CD will be a more raw, faster one! Still it is very Opeth orientated like 'Orchid'! Other titles are 'Nectar', 'The Night and the Silent Waters' and 'Advent'. We will also include an instrumental track which is just an amazing one! We don't have any title for this record as yet, unfortunately."

And will there be more piano by Anders? How has the response been to the piano track on "Orchid", "The Silhouette"? How come the piece ended up on the CD - as you told me you have to more or less force that guy to present his compositions?

"Anders is a mighty pianist, and he surprises all of us with his small selections of melancholy. He is, on the other hand, very modest! 'The Silhouette' is Anders'



composition which had been ready for a long time before the recording sessions. We just wanted it on the CD as it is a great track!"

Last year it finally happened, the most incredible thing. No, it was not the second coming of Christ, but something even more spectacular: "Orchid" was released! You had been waiting for this one for quite a while (like myself!) - if I were you I would probably have turned Lee up a long time ago. But these delays were not all his fault, were they?

"It was all kinds of different reasons for this delay. The company wasn't in its best shape, and also different legal advisers took their promised time to finish the contract. I'd say that at one time, everything was somewhat of a big stinking mess. Then things started happening..."

Do you think the situation with Opeth would have been much different if "Orchid" had been released in, say, July 1994? Can you find any positive aspects in this delay - do you think the rumours about this release can have worked as free advertisement? While on the other hand, with too long delays there is also the danger of the public getting bored of waiting, and thus forgetting about the entire release. What do you think? Speak yer mind, oh wise one!

"That's very hard to say. A positive thing might be that we got more time to promote ourselves and the record before its release. Then, as you said, we knew about the fact that people might get tired of waiting. All I can say about it now is that it is out and that it represents Opeth in every way. Those who might have lost interest due to this delay... I apologise!"

"Orchid" must be one of the leading ones when it comes to the amounts of hassles that can surround a record. The aforementioned delay was not enough - the sticker turned out two inches instead of two centimetres, the entire booklet was in negative and the disc itself ended up clear blue. Are you not frustrated at all or did you take all this with a big pinch of salt?

"Of course it was a bit irritating that the CD did not end up exactly like we wanted, even after huge delays. But the fact of having it released drowned all and any negative feelings. I do not care about the sticker or blue CDs anymore!"

Originally the cover orchid was supposed to be on the CD, but then the CD plant had called up Lee, telling the picture was too big (hm, ever thought about reducing it?). So they asked what colour they would put on the CD instead. Lee answered: "Blue!" Hehe. From the second pressing onwards all details should have been corrected - and the CD should be all black instead.

We cannot deny that Opeth have been very celebrated lately. Have you thought about the danger that such success can bring, namely that of you ending up arrogant? That you would in the end take all success for granted. Arrogance is not only a danger to a musician's personality but also to his creativity.

"I know that it might be easy to become a 'larger than life' type of person from receiving success, but I don't think that this will happen in Opeth. I mean, I know that we are a great band, and I personally see us as



the best! But that is my own honest opinion which I truly stand for. I do not by any means expect people to think the same thing. But for myself, I'd be an idiot if I didn't think that the music I write is great. I don't get this opinion from reading reviews of the album, or hearing nice words about our music. My confidence strictly dwells in what I accomplish myself! There is a big difference between being arrogant and confident, I'd say."

Yes - many arrogant persons actually have bad self-confidence. The amusing thing is that over-confident people can easily be seen as arrogant... and also end up arrogant, ha! Enuff of this pseudo-psychological bullshit, and on we go to other matters.

The first time I interviewed you, in the summer of 1993, Opeth were not too well known. You were just rehearsing... and working at that guitar shop. You were hardly busy doing interviews. The second time I interviewed you, one year afterwards, you had recorded your debut and things started happening. Today, the third time I am throwing my crooked question marks at thee, the snowball has been rolling for a while and Opeth are doing better than you could have expected. How will it be the next time I interview you?

"Next time I guess it's most likely the same as today. We might have another album and some more experience, but all in all, it will be the same I reckon."

Candlelight wants to put you on a tour with Emperor. Yourself being a big fan of their music, I'm sure you will like it. But now another thing stuck in my mind: Johan, the bassist that was recruited in 1994, is from a rather different musical background. What does a fusion bassist think about all of a sudden touring with the church burning Satanists of Emperor? Or what did he know about the black metal underground before he joined Opeth and thus ended up in the controversial honour of probably touring with these (in)famous Norwegians?

"Interesting question! Johan isn't very experienced within the black/death metal scene. I think his first contact with this music must have been in 1991 when he did a gig with us. But hey, I'd say that he has been into

it all far longer than many of today's bandwagon trendies. I do not know anything about his opinion about it all, although I do know that he's a big At the Gates fan! I don't know his opinion about Emperor."

Well I know mine - they rule of course. Now that was hardly a surprising opinion. However, you seem to have ended up in real good (evil?) company, not only on tours but also on compilation albums... What is happening with the Celtic Frost tribute album that Dwell Records was about to release?

"The Celtic Frost tribute will be out in March I've been informed. I reckon that it will be a real great one actually! The best thing about it is that Thomas Warrior and S. Priestly will appear on the CD as well. I've been told that T. Warrior was absolutely impressed by the Opeth cover version, which is an honour!"

Hey, that was an understatement if I've ever heard one! Other bands featuring are Morgion, the temporarily reformed Slaughter, Inner Thought, Cianide, 13, Closedown, Emperor, Mayhem (don't know if he's the old or the new one though), Apollyon's Sun, Grave, Enslaved, Divine Eve, Sadistic Intent... yesh, that's all. \$16 plus \$2 for shipping. Information and catalogue can be obtained from Dwell Records, PO Box 39439, Los Angeles, CA 90039-0439, USA.

Okay, have you listened to that tape I sent you in August, with Gods Tower?

"Hmmm... yes! Actually, no. I will though!"

Cheesebutt. Ah, one more question - where do you think this Osmose rumour came from? That Herve would sort of have bought the contract. Now you have the possibility to kill this rumour, as you have one more record to do for Mr Barrett.

"I don't have a clue where that rumour came from! It's not true anyway. Actually, we have two more records to do for Mr Barrett!"

Did I find questions to all your answers?

"Yes, and I did enjoy the search for 'em! Please be satisfied with my answers, sauna man, okay! Time for bed!"

Opeth c/o Micke Akerfeldt, Vedevagslingan 34, 12474 Bandhagen, Sweden.

Typewriter heroes and xerox jocks

Dead Zone issue 1 (A5, 56 pages)

Interviews with: Beyond Fear, Deranged, Haemorrhage, Avulsed, Internal Bleeding, Hemorragia, Dawn, Fermenting Innards, Hellbound, Imprecation, Uncreation, Mordicus, Desecrate, Blood Ritual, Unnatural, Morphosis, Mortal Mutilation, Human Bait, Fermento, Pavor, Absorbed, Brutal Thin, Temperance, Dornanth, Germen, Morstice and Vomiting Corpses.

A fine first effort by all accounts, Dead Zone displays all the traits of a great fanzine in the making. Granted, there is a fair amount of naiveté in the writing style, but a great deal of enthusiasm too. This I like in a 'zine, and in the case of editor Julio it really is nothing more than a genuine love for brutality and gore speaking, as opposed to the voice of up-sucking brown-nosedness. Those of you familiar with Anatomia will immediately spot the similarities, both in the bands featured, writing style and appearance, and it is therefore unsurprising that Mr. Rodriguez has decided to dedicate his first issue to Bill. The layout is fine, although some fine-tuning is perhaps required, the text small enough not to be wasteful and big enough to be legible, and Julio's English surprisingly good.

\$5 from Julio Rodriguez, c/Gran Via 11, 5º, D28013 Madrid, Spain.

Headfucker issue 3 (B4, 72 pages)

Interviews with: Dying Fetus, Necrotic Mutation, Immolation, Corpus Deglecti, Broken Hope, Aesthetic Death, Gorelust, Torture Krypt, Descendent, Internal Bleeding, Kataklysm, Scattered Remnants, Cryptopsy, Mark Riddick, Horror of Horrors, Esoteric, Adnauseum and X-Bone Maniacs.

Wow, pretty! Headfucker bears a closer resemblance to mags like Q or Spin than your everyday underground piece of photocopied excrement, with its extensive computer layout, laser-printed text and general glossiness. The quality of the photographs is A-1-A, but there's still something lacking in the writing department methinks. Personally I prefer more in-depth interviews, and Stateside bands are not going to provide you with them, Raffaella Guerini, editor and chief! In fact, it is primarily the choice of bands that gets my goat. Everything else about Headfucker is excellent, and I really appreciate the experiments in layout. If you are a huge US death/grind fan you've probably already got this and if you aren't (like m'self) the chances of you enjoying it are pretty slim. Still, definitely the best Southern European mag on the market at the moment. Issue 4 should be near-incredible...

\$5 from Raffaella Guerini, CP 151, 25038 Rovato, Brescia, Italy.

The Sepulchral Voice issue 12 (B4, 24 pages)

Interviews with: Dismember, Order From Chaos, Summertime Daisies and NPTP.

A slightly disappointing twelfth Sepulchro-Vocal instalment, mainly due to its slimness. However, the reviews are once again masterstrokes in their banality and bluntness; editor Mike Campbell and his asocial associates really know how to cut

\$4 from PO Box 30624, Oshawa Shopping
Centre, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada L1J 8L8.

Sombre Eve issue 4 (A4, 40 pages)

Among the Wolves at Dawn c/o Shane
Transvaal D, PO Box 244, Kedron, Q4031,
Australia.

The Ninth Circle issue 1 (A5, 44 pages)

£1.50/\$3 from Paul Carty, 13 Fleming
Way, Hillhouse, Hamilton ML3 9PQ,
Scotland.

Ablaze issue 6 (A4, 60 pages)

Subscriptions cost 36 Deutsche Mark (6 issues), and orders should be sent to Peter Schramm, Oberspreestr. 59b, D-12439 Berlin, Germany.

Putrefaction issue 8 (A4, 50 pages)

Interviews with: Centinex, Immolation, Gorgoroth, Satariel, Ancient, Hades, Gehenna, Sadus, Torment, Abscess, Unanimated, Dark Funeral, At the Gates, Into the Woods..., Crown of Thorns, Rotting Christ, Nastrond, Godkiller and Witch-Hunt.

Putrefaction c/o Tomas Nyqvist, Finningev
72 D. 64542 Strangnas, Sweden.

RIP issue 3 (A4, 40 pages)

Kentucky Fried Afterbirth issue 1 (A4, 124 pages)

Kentucky Fried Afterbirth issue 1 (A4, 124 pages)

Isten issue 7 (A4, 56 pages)

\$5 from Mikko Mattila, Peltolamminkatu 6
A 17, 33840 Tampere, Finland.

Isten issue 7b (A5, 20 pages)

Intoxicated issue 3 (A5, 35 pages)

Interviews with: Fear Factory, Cancer, Dying Fetus, Misery Loves Co, Beyond Fear, Year Zero, Sargatanas, Oscuro, Expulsion, Beyond North, Pavor, Concrete Head, Innards, Canopic Jar and Profanity.

Intoxicated 3 is Graham Finney's twenty-first fanzine, and one can only marvel at how he has managed to keep himself and his readers interested all these years. His mag always look the same, you see, and as far as I can tell his writing style hasn't changed or improved over the past three or four years either. However, his support of the underground is admirable and his persistence even more so. Layout-wise, things fortunately look set to improve from now on, as we are informed in the editorial that Graham will soon be getting himself a new computer. About fucking time, is all I can say! Some more in-depth reviews would be nice to see in future, as would a little more selectiveness when it comes to interviewing bands. Overall, then, an average kinda read but worth supporting/being supported by anyway.

£1.40/\$5 from Graham Finney, 14 Greenhill Road, Billinge, nr. Wigan, Lancashire WN5 7LG, England.

Corporal Arts issue 2 (B5, 76 pages)

\$6 from Tomoaki Kanai, 1-26-3-204,
Miyagi, Adachi-Ku, Tokyo, 120, Japan.

Deprived issue 3 (A5, 80 pages)

Interviews with: In the Woods..., Fleurety, Burzum, Darkthrone, Fifth Dominion, Morphosis, Everdark, Dark White, Desecration, Cernunnos, Russ Smith (Terrorizer mag), Bill (Anatomia 'zine), Inverted, Esoteric and December Moon.

Rather a large improvement from issue 2, is Brian Taube's third *Deprived*, especially in the layout department. An A5 *Slayer*, really, is the impression I got when first laying eyes on't, and the black metal orientated content had more than a little to do with that. Some of the bands interviewed are - shall we say - 'interesting', but there are a lot of excellent acts in there too, e.g. *Fleurety* and *Morphosis*. Mr Taube's writing style has progressed noticeably over the past eighteen months or so, and *Deprived* has a far stronger character of its own now. Fortunately, humour is not something the fellow shies from, but some of his in-jokes went right over my head. Still, his pro/anti-black metal interplay with co-editor Antoinette is fucking hilarious and smacks of *Thanatography*, I thought. His reviews are pretty much okay, but hers... Well, I could say something very sexist, but I won't. Bottom line is this: *Deprived* is a very smart looking and reading fanzine that does the Irish scene proud.

\$4 from Brian Taube, St. Patricks, Main Street, Roundwood, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

Demos...

(and whatnot)

BLESSED REALM (UK) - "Doomed to the Witchwood" live demo '95

Hmm, tempted as I am just to rip the complete and utter pish out of this, Blessed Realm's first official release, I think it'd be fairer to say that this is simply not my cup of cosmic tea at all.

I can honestly see nothing new or of any significance other than a cash-in on the current doom metal trend in BR's music, and despite the band's relative youth there is little to make their material stand out from that of any other similarly inclined outfit in Britain, or indeed the world over. I am sure that front man and ex-Morstice vocalist Steve Gillham's pushiness will ensure a bright future for him and the other three members of this County Durham quartet, but in my eyes far more work is required in the song writing department before any further steps are even considered. I suppose that sound-wise the tape is reasonable, but that is one of few redeeming factors. There is nothing original at all about mixing Candlemass, Cathedral and Saint Vitus riffs with fucking moronic "Ooohs", "Yeahs" and "Alrights", and if Steve & Co. think that attempting to follow in the footsteps of the few decent UK doom bands around by plagiarising them shamelessly is going to earn them the respect of this 'ere journalist, they've got another thing coming!

Pathetic fucking hippie doom heads will no doubt go wild over this 5 track farce, but do not expect me to recommend it. A blank plus sufficient postage to: The Blessed Realm Brotherhood of Doom (ahem...), 6 High Grange Road, Spennymoor, County Durham DL16 6RA, England.

WITHERED BEAUTY (Swe) - "Through Silent Skies" demo '95

Such was my mate Daniel's eagerness to appear as metal as possible for the band photograph that he clean forgot about how in Sweden winter tends to be marginally less warm than summer, tore off his jumper and caught a nasty cold. Wimp! This is the same Daniel, by the way, that drums in Forlorn, and he is accompanied by Magnus Bjork (also from Forlorn) and some guy called Tobias.

Melodic death/black metal is unsurprisingly the name of the game here, but rather than than hardcore, eh? Actually, Withered Beauty are probably among the best unsigned widdlers at the moment. Why? Because their music sounds less forced and more convincing than that of the competition, and despite the fact that what they play isn't exactly the most original stuff around they seem to possess the uncanny ability to make me like it regardless.

Methinks the production has a lot to do with this, as for once the guitars are up front instead of skulking somewhere in the shadows of the drums and vocals. There's a wealth of excellent riffing too, and the variety of vocal styles (it's nice to

hear growls and proper singing in there) allows everything to slide past more pleasantly than usual. A foreboding gothic atmosphere prevails throughout, an effect only enhanced by the touches of classical guitars, and the songs themselves are memorable enough to encourage further listening.

Overall, then, a superb demo - even if you already possess a number of tapes like it - and one which I've found myself coming back to quite a bit. \$5 from Magnus Bjork, Valbog 35 1 tr, 803 21 Gavle, Sweden.

AFTERMATH (Aus) - "Warning: May Cause Birth Defects" demo '95

Hmm, methinks these five strapping young sheep shearers (I said *shearers*) from New South Wales have heard one Hypocrisy LP too many, but I wouldn't give a Castlemaine XXXX for anything else!

Basically, what we have here is a typically unoriginal Australian death metal band with typically unoriginal Australian influences, i.e. Carcass, Deicide and Morbid Angel, but I'd be hard pressed to find anything wrong with the music itself as far as death metal goes. It's fast, it's heavy, it's well played and produced... Yep, everything's there but personality, and if that isn't a problem for you there's no reason why you shouldn't give Aftermath a go.

Four tracks of decent death from down-under, a pro-duplicated tape, xeroxed cover and a significant improvement from the band's 1994 demo can be yours for \$6 from Warhead Records, 1B Smith Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150, Australia.

CONFUSION CORPORATION (Sco) - "Confusion Begins" demo '94 + "Purify" demo '95

Scottish metal bands are hard enough to find, but good ones are even rarer a commodity. Fortunately, though, there are a couple, and Dumbarton's Confusion Corporation are one of them.

Demo #1 sees the quintet in the studio for the first time after a number of gigs and is a fine combination of Suffocation and Fear Factory influences, wrapped up in an extremely weighty yet unbelievably clear production. Naturally there are plenty of CC's own ideas in there too, such as the moody cello section during "Rust Coloured Skies", which is refreshingly out of the ordinary. Three vocalists and four vocal styles (screams, roars, grunts and Burton C. Bell-type moans) ensure a pleasant variation and, apart from the latter, are executed with relative flair. The cover, whilst sporting one of Ciaron Slavin's (Total Fear Comics, Anatomia, R.I.P., etc.) more apocalyptic visions, is a little disappointing in its simplicity, but does the job.

The second tape, which I received in May, is the band's most recent recording and comprises of seven brand new tracks. Most of the Suffocation influences have been dropped in favour of a style more akin to recent Brutal Truth. Very akin

in fact, almost to the point of plagiarism, but far more interesting in my opinion, as combined with the semi-Industrial vibe and strings section the overall effect is really quite fresh and original. I'm still not entirely convinced by Quizzy's clean vocals, but they're growing on me. All in all, then, tape #2 is as impressive a sophomore release as anyone could have hoped for, myself included, and definitely merits your attention.

"Purify" will cost you £3/\$6 and "Confusion Begins" is, I think, still available for £2.50/\$5 from Quizzy at 57 Bontine Avenue, Brucehill, Dumbarton G82 4EF, Scotland.

ADNAUSEAM (USA) - "Another Horror of Life" demo '94

Those who shed a tear upon learning of Rottrevore's demise shall weep no longer, as Denver-based Adnauseam sound exactly like them. Well, not *exactly* like them, but they do share the late great grindsters' blasting intensity and bowel-rupturing down-tunedness. Brujeria too spring to mind when listening to "Another Horror of Life", so you know what you're in for and it sure as hell ain't pretty.

Sewage metal would, I think, be the best way of describing it, as the production is sludgier than my old ma's sticky toffee pudding, but if anything this only enhances the overall effect. There is a fair mixture of blast beats and heavy mid-paced sections, but on the whole the tunes themselves aren't memorable enough for my liking. The lyrics suck quite badly too, but who needs 'em?

Adnauseam are by no means perfect, but for a first attempt this tape is a worthy investment and, as drummer and spokesperson Brian Kohn, informs me, there should be a full length out soon. Four tracks on a pro-duplicated cassette, a glossy inlay and a lyric sheet can be yours for \$6 (world-wide) from 452 S Lincoln Street, Denver, Colo 80209-1625, USA.

SANGUINARY (Swe) - Demo 1 '95

Sanguinary formed in 1991, so it is not particularly surprising that what they play harks back to the golden days of Swedish death metal on more than one occasion. Comprised of four beer-swilling metal warriors, the band originally recorded a rehearsal/demo in the spring of 1994, but never released it due to the dodgy sound. Instead, they saved up their pennies and took a trip to Unisound. Big mistake.

You see, much as I admire Danny-boy Swano's work on albums such as Dissection's debut or "Purgatory Afterglow", nine times out of ten the demos he produces sound the same or, in Sanguinary's case, unconvincing. I dunno, I guess I'm just a die-hard fan of *pure* doomsdmetal played the dirty & distorted way (a la Necrophobic, "Like An Everflowing Stream", etc.), but I really think Sanguinary could have done with a heavier, more intense guitar sound and less 'clickety-click' drums on their debut tape.

The music itself is superb, though. At first I wasn't really too amazed, passing it off as generically wildly, but after a few listens the tape has grown on me considerably. Fast, morbid, growly and melodic - precisely the ingredients required for a purulent stew of death the ancient way. Well, the early '90s way...

Yep, a good 'un, and I'm looking forward to hearing the band's next studio outing, hopefully enforced by a superior production! \$5 from Matias Leinikka, Gullivestigen 38, S-197 34 Bro, Sweden.

COVENANT (Sco) - "De Profundis" demo '95

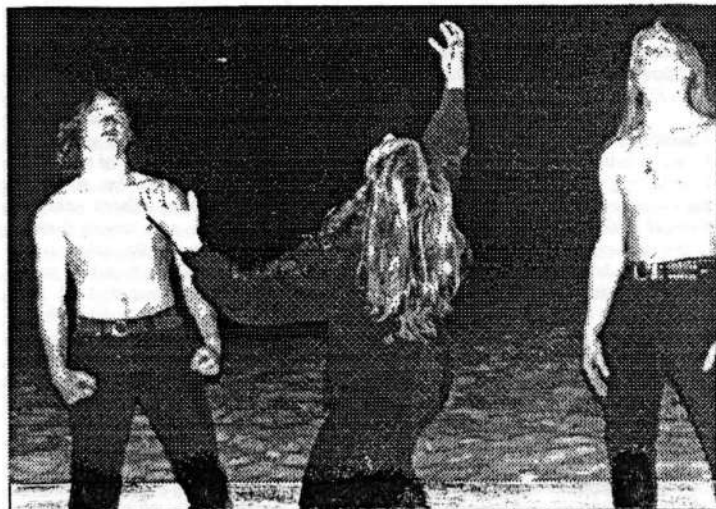
Much as I'd love to prattle on for line after line about Covenant being the latest and greatest addition to Scotland's growing death metal community, about their superb musicianship and song-writing capabilities, their immensely heavy yet incredibly memorable tunes, their intelligent lyrics and breath-taking originality, not to mention their vast underground experience and overwhelming modesty, I cannot. Why? I think you've probably already guessed...

Send £2/\$4 if you must to: Covenant, 2/1 1 Broompark Drive, Dennistown, Glasgow G31, Scotland.

VARIOUS - "Dark Age" volume 1

Features: Neolithic, Avulsed, IDB, Theodicy, Anthropomancy, Cryptic Tales, Vastatrix, Krabator, Orphaned Land, Internal Bleeding, Warp Spasm, Cromm Cruac, Regredior, TVOB and Morstice.

You get a pro-printed cover with your Dark Age tape, which is a pleasant change from the photocopied norm. Unfortunately, the artwork is so foul it is wasted. There's nothing particularly spectacular on offer here, neither in the



bands featured nor the overall presentation, and the sound quality varies from average to bad to worse as per usual. If you feel the need to investigate any of the abovementioned acts further you might want to give Dark Age a shot, but know-it-alls like m'self will no doubt have heard most of them before. Not particularly inspiring, I'm afraid.

£2.50/\$6 from Nel, 47 Parkside, Spennymoor, County Durham DL16 6SA.

REVOLT (UK) - "Human Abattoir" demo '95

It is a rare occurrence in Britain today when a band manages to capture the vibe of its late eighties counterparts as effectively as Revolt have. Perhaps the hardcore scene has spawned more accurate crust throwbacks - I don't know and don't care. Fact of the matter is that this Durham-based act satisfy my every need where raw and relentless pummeling is concerned.

Influence-wise we're talking ENT, Doom, Autopsy and perhaps early Mortician here, so you pretty much know what to expect. I hear some Abscess in there too, but that's probably just a convenient coincidence. Revolt's music isn't the most original around, but I doubt it was intended to be. Instead, the guys have decided to inject massive doses of speed and brutality - something most UK bands are afraid of.

The cover ain't perfect, neither is the production, but who cares? Certainly, the grind/crustcore scene doesn't seem to, and there are a few split vinyl releases on the way as you read this. Fans of raw and sick punkiness should send £2/\$5 to the drummer Matt at this address: 21 Moorland Close, Sunnybrow, Crook, Co. Durham DL15 0XB, England.

GRIEF OF EMERALD (Swe) - "The Beginning..." demo '95

Widdly-widdly-widdly-IAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!! That's Grief of Emerald, that is. Exactly what the Emeralds are beginning I do not know, but it sure as hell ain't anything particularly new or innovative. Still, that's no reason to dislike them. You see, folks, here at The Crypt we're pretty easy-going when it comes to stuff like originality and whatnot, and as long as the music itself is well played, convincing and/or downright fucking heavy it's all right in our books. Grief of Emerald's music is all of these things and then some, so we like them.

They call what they play war metal, and I don't have a problem with that. A good thing probably, as they'd no doubt kick my ass if I did (never laugh at a Swede with a big sword, as the saying goes). As for what the shit *sounds* like, try Marduk meets Enslaved (first mini-LP). In other words, really fast, melodic and screamy black... sorry, war metal laced with imposing sounding synths.

Four songs, a great production and an impressive cover can be yours for only \$5 from Robert Olsson, Hyggstraket 9 413, 45172 Udevalla, Sweden.

FORGOTTEN SILENCE (Cze) - "Thots" demo '95

I think I'll mention Forgotten Silence alongside Nocturnus, Phlebotomized and Pan-Thy-Monium if it's all the same to you. You can probably work out half the reason why, i.e. the keyboards, but that isn't everything. In fact, I'd be more inclined to equate the Czech sextet's death metal non-conformity with that of the abovementioned three than anything else.

"Thots", FS's second tape, is quite simply astounding. Not only in terms of the songs themselves, but also because of its inventiveness and ambition. Playing music as obscure as this in the Czech Republic cannot be the simplest of tasks, or the most lucrative. However, the band has somehow capitalised on their situation and truly flourished.

They radiate emotion, flaunt their considerable musicianship and generally stun the listener with their brilliance and diversity. Technical and melodic, original and involved, the tunes on "Thots" glow with a strange, enigmatic quality and do not sound like anyone else. Amazing! Female vocals and



The Emerlads (from left to right Jonny, Dennis, Jimmy, Andress and Robert) being not very nice to a nun.

whispers are used to great, i.e. seductive, effect, and the keyboards of Jan Friedman lace the whole thing with that special something that makes me like the music I like, if you see what I mean. Oh, and I was delighted to discover the aforementioned's interpretation of one of my favourite Enya songs "The Evening".

70 minutes of superb music wrapped in a pro-printed sleeve for five dollars is surely more worthy of your attention and money than a CD full of half the amount of shite boasting a sub-xerox quality cover for quadruple the price (hello Darkthrone). In other words, buy "Thots" now.

Forgotten Silence c/o Radim Chrobok, Vresinska 106, Ostrava-Pornba 70800, Czech Republic.

ACCURSED (USA) - "Lament" promo tape '94

Now, when Gabe Catanzaro mentioned in a letter earlier this year that the latest Accursed material was headed *Richtung* black metal, alarm bells went off in my head. How many promising death metal bands had we already lost to the infernal trend, I thought...

My anxiety, as it turned out, was unjustified and my relief immeasurable when I popped this into my tape deck. Gabe & Co. had not come over all Cradle Of Filth (ooer!), but had simply gotten a whole lot darker and more morbid. True, there are a few screamy vocals and eerie keyboard parts, but I'm not going to be so hasty as to get up on the ol' soap-box and shout 'sell-out' or whatever. No, I'm going to sit back and wait for the soon-to-be-released debut CD, which should, I imagine, kill.

The promo isn't available, incidentally, but the song "Lament" appears on a very tasty Visceral Productions compilation CD (\$10) alongside stuff by Cryptopsy, Dead Horse, Decrepit, CSSO and 11 others. A two-track cassette EP is also available for \$4, featuring tracks originally destined for a 7". This and the sampler can be ordered from the label at PO Box 1142, Mentor, OH 44061-1142, USA, and Gabe can be

contacted at 3516 Menomonee River Parkway, Wauwatosa, WI 53222, USA.

DARK HERESY (UK) - "Diabolus In Musica" demo '93

The current UK scene, it seems, comprises largely of second rate bands with second hand influences, the large majority of whom have little in the way of musical talent or prowess. It is always a pleasure, then, to receive demos like Dark Heresy's second, which not only shows considerable ability in terms of song writing and musicianship, but also passed through my routine *spot the influence* test unscathed, leaving me in a state of pleasant bewilderment.

I suppose death metal is as good a categorisation as any to describe the band's music, seeing as I wasn't provided with one, but Dark Heresy's death metal is neither standard nor pretentiously avant-garde. It is somewhere in between, and that suits me just fine. Varied tempos, well constructed, well written songs and lyrics, character and originality, and perhaps most importantly of all *melody* can be heard on "Diabolus...", and that is more than enough to convince me. What you get for your hard-earned £3/\$6 is a nice sounding, nice looking piece of plastic that comes with a money-back guarantee, and if that hasn't persuaded you then I don't know what will. Look out for an album on Unisound Records, which should be out by the time you read this. Dark Heresy c/o Hans Stiles, 3 Cranes Park, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 3AB, England.

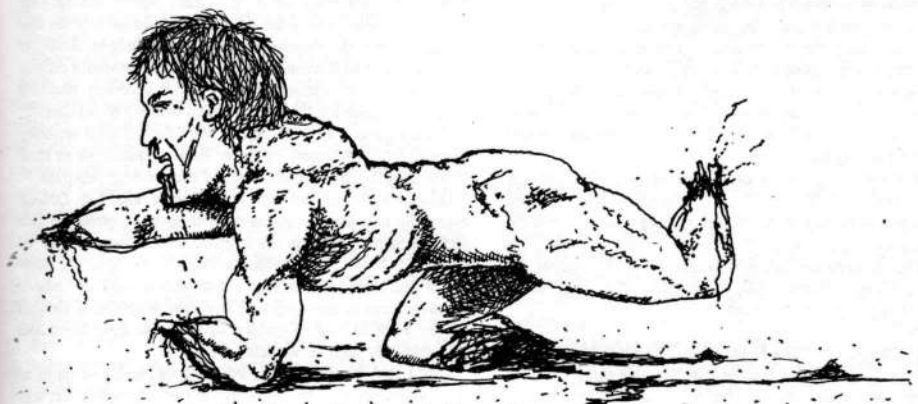
CRIMSON MIDWINTER (Fin) - "Just Another Cold Wasteland" demo '95

After the recent spate of Xysma-like death'n'roll bands from Finland it was only a matter of time before those of a darker nature picked up on this - shall we say - trend. Crimson Midwinter are the first I have come across, taming their music, in true Finnish fashion, "blackish crimson rockabilly". Worryingly, I am inclined to agree, as there is simply no other way I of describing it. Okay, so maybe there is... Try Belial meets Sentenced meets fuck-knows-what-but-it-sure-is-groovy for size, as among the typical relentlessly blasting and ice-cold Suomiriffs are some of the most obscure melodies this side of Cathedral. Pretty inconceivable, I know, but it works. Well, almost...

Being a young band, CM still have a lot to work at, but I have a hunch that greatness lies just around the corner. The production is fine and the packaging ample, so I'd say "Just Another Cold Wasteland" is well worth a listen. Demo #2 is awaited with anticipation! \$3 (Europe) or \$4 (elsewhere) to: Jussi Helenius, Mantykankareenkatu 14 as. 13, 21200 Raisio, Finland.

MOANING WIND (Swe) - Demo 2 '94

Are Moaning Wind yet another widdly metal band from the woods of Sweden? Well, yes and no. A darker, more malign Paradise Lost with screamy vocals would perhaps be the best description; slightly less gothic than Katatonia, but not altogether dissimilar. Catchy riffs abound and these aren't thrown towards you at the speed of light either, making them far easier to appreciate than those of the countless other widdlers around at the moment. Seems to me there are less of them too (riffs, not widdlers - unfortunately), so the band obviously subscribe to the *quality not quantity* ethic (there's Katatonia again).



DAVE '92

I'd like to hear some subtler growls perhaps, keyboards, strings and female vocals, if at all possible, on future recordings as these would undoubtedly give the Karlstad quintet that necessary edge.

As it is, however, this four tracker is well worth a listen, and I'll be damned if Moaning Wind don't get themselves signed if they continue to produce music this good. Promising! \$4 from: Martin Bjoorn, Spiksmidsvegen 10, 653 46 Karlstad, Sweden.

VARIOUS - "Total Holocaust" volume 3

Features: Decrucior, Hastur, Malediction, Sick Excuse, Fleshgrind, Involuntary Carnage, Detektor, Immured, Dehydrated, Anthropomancy, Loonatikk, Intestine Baalism, Worm, Torture Crypt, Overlord, Exhauster, Seers Tear and Still Heaven.

Fairly interesting compilation from Greece here, but not one I've found myself coming back to one helluva lot. It doesn't consist wholly of Greek bands, though, which is probably a good thing. The cover leaves a lot to be desired, as with most compilation tapes I've encountered, and the sound varies from below average to downright poor.

To be fair, the compiler Stavros has made an admirable attempt to bring together a wide range of bands from all over the world, and there are quite a few on this, the third volume, that I hadn't heard before. If the above list interests you, and you don't mind second generation copies of demo tracks I'd give Total Holocaust 3 a listen, especially as it's cheap (\$4). Stavros has since put out a fourth and fifth volume, so ask about those when you write.

Total Holocaust c/o Iordanidis Stavros 20031, Kalamaria 55110, Salonica, Greece.

MORBID SYMPHONY (UK) - "The Obscure Depths of Light" cass. EP '94

Great meat'n'potatoes death metal is what we have here; no more, no less. Having been around since 1990, it isn't particularly surprising that MS sound every bit as tight and professional as, say, Benediction. Better in fact (I never was a 'diction fan). And more worthy of a record deal if you ask me, which you probably wouldn't. They pull off the Bolt Thrower thing far more convincingly too, so I can see no reason why they shouldn't be enjoying equal amounts of success and popularity. I do get the occasional niggles about their apparent lack of originality, I suppose, but tracks like "As the Centuries Turn" soon smooth over any cracks of doubt, being, as they are, downright fucking heavy.

The production does the material justice, as does the superb packaging and sleeve design, so if well played Brit-death sounds like your cup of tea I advise you to post your £3.50/\$6 pronto! Morbid Symphony c/o Keith Hill, 66 Newnham Drive, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, Cheshire L65 5AJ. Oh yeah, there's a strictly limited and fairly interesting remix/live cassette EP available from the band too. Ask for details...

RAGNAROK (UK) - "Beloved of the Raven God" cass. LP '95

Not to be confused with the Norwegian youngsters of the same name, Durham's Ragnarok claim to have been actively involved in the black metal scene since the late eighties. Weird how I'd never heard of them before, but there you go...

Musically this release leaves much to be desired. Basically, it is "Blood Fire Death" re-re-re-revisited with a drum machine and a female screamer. An extremely meagre production helps matters not, and one cannot help but cringe at some of the riffing. There's a fair amount of atmosphere on offer, I suppose, but this tends to be shattered as soon as the guitars kick in. I'd advise the band to spend a little more time on their songs in future, as I cannot recall a single good riff from the whole tape, and the ones that did stand out were horrific.

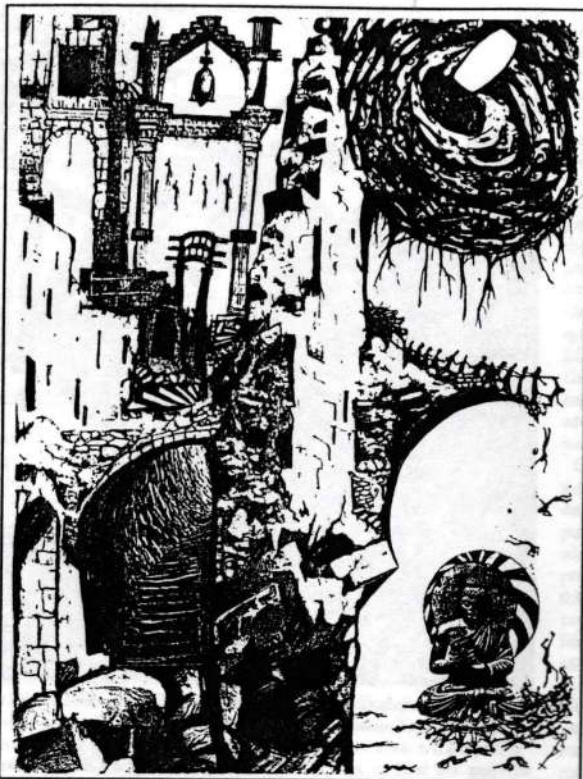
If a hybrid of - like I said - Bathory, Burzum and Skyclad sounds like your cup of tea you could do worse, and the packaging is rather professional looking. However, the Scandinavians are far, far better at it. "Beloved of the Raven God" will cost you a whopping £5/\$10 and is obtainable from Deorth, 40 Grange Terrace, Pelton Fell, Chester-le-St, Co. Durham DH2 2PD, England.

GOSPEL OF THE HORNS (Aus) - "The Satanist's Dream" demo '94 + promo '95

Any demo that kicks off with a huge *ALL RIGHT!* and a Venom riff will get an enthusiastic thumbs-up from me, and Gospel of the Horns' debut does just that.

The fun doesn't end there either, as the Queensland-based foursome seem intent on recreating that old school blackthrash vibe all over again. Like a lot of things, metal is generally best done the old way, and that means the Frost, Slayer, Sodom and Destruction way. If you understand and enjoy the principles of this you will adore GOTH, if you don't (like a certain Satpal Kalsi from Terrorizer) you will not. It's as simple as that, really.

Definitely the best Australian demo I've heard in a long time, "The Satanist's Dream" contains 4 tracks of eighties



music recorded in the nineties. Some might argue that this is pointless nostalgia, but I for one would rather listen to a present day reincarnation of what once was than some pretentious pseudo-industrial keyboard wizard claiming to have reinvented metal as we know it, if you catch my drift...

I received what turned out to be the band's last studio recording in October or thereabouts and was more than thrilled by it. The influences are pretty much the same, I guess, but it is plainly obvious that GOTH are their own people nowadays. This time around we get two tracks of raw and deliciously unpolished Sodomy ("Nocturnal Passage" and "The Wolf Lone") that are noticeably better arranged than the demo material. A refreshing blast from the past by all means, are Gospel of the Horns.

'Tis a great shame, then, that the band is no more, but I'm pretty sure both the demo (\$6) and the promo (a blank + 2 IRCs would probably do the trick) are still available from front-man and lyricist Shane Transvaal D. at PO Box 244, Kedron Q 4031, Australia.

MEPHISTO (UK) - "Toll the Raven Knell" demo '94

I don't know why, but for some reason I've always purposefully steered well clear of Mephisto. Maybe I kept confusing them with the godawful Megiddo (another of Cacophonous' 7" gems) or maybe I was just reading the wrong 'zines, as everyone seemed to be heralding them as the next big thing in UK black metal (a term in itself, incidentally, that still has me smirking every time I hear it).

Whatever the case, it was not until Esoteric's summer '95 tour with Inverted that I became interested, having met and chatted to their sticksman Ric in Berwick-Upon-Tweed (he was Esoteric's sesh-member at the time). Soon after I dropped him a line with a blank, as promised, and in return I got rather a tidy little package.

Musically things are nowhere near as sub-par as I had expected, and At the Gates would appear to be the primary motivation as opposed to Darkthrone or whoever. The tunes are generally well written, but could use a little more venom somewhere along the line to give them that necessary *umph*. Also, things aren't quite as tight as they could or should be on a sophomore outing and I personally found this to be quite a turn-off. Don't get me wrong... I mean, we're not talking Covenant here, but a little more time in the rehearsal studio would not do any harm.

Still, considering there's only three of them, I'd say that with "Toll the Raven Knell" Mephisto have proven themselves to be one of the most promising new acts from the UK in quite some time. I think the tape is still available, but you'd better write and ask first. Mephisto c/o Ric Barnes, 10 Dingle Close, Simmondley, Glossop in the high peak, Derbyshire SK13 9NL, England.

MASTER (USA) - "The Final Word" demo '95

I'm sorry, but I refuse to believe that this, *this thing* has been recorded by a band with twelve years' and seven albums' experience. The three songs on this tape are, at best, boring and the level of musicianship is shockingly low.

A lot of people may feel that Master deserve another chance, but this demo shows that they have absolutely nothing new to

offer. Furthermore, Master have made no attempt to update their sound, which sounded fucking dated on their 1990 Nuclear Blast debut.

Anyway, as I have already said, the past five years have taught Master nothing and their lack of progress has meant that they have been left lagging far behind their competitors and every other bad band I can think of is better than Master in one way or another. I think it's a sad state of affairs when the so-called originators of death metal stand to be surpassed by every other bad demo band on the planet.

If you still want to order this tape, it costs \$5, plus \$2 shipping charges. Send your money to: Paul Speckmann, 1217 N. Clark, W. Hollywood, CA 90069, USA. (Hans Stiles)

EPITAPH (UK) - "Unearthed" demo '95

A great big fuck-off Sabbath riff greets the unsuspecting listener at the start of this, Epitaph's second demo, and things just get groovier.

Considering they've only been around since late 1993 Epitaph are a superb band, for mixed in with their somewhat standard death metal are quirky little melodies and jives. A bit like a hybrid of Xysma, old Paradise Lost and Bolt Thrower or something.

Song-wise things are far more interesting than their 1994 tape "Inscriptions", although the production is a bit lifeless. The vocals too are - at best - uninspired (especially the dreadful screeches/rasps), but the strength of the music alone compensates for that. Demo number three should be great, especially if the lads speed things up a bit, and I'm quite prepared to wait for it, as given half a chance I'm sure Epitaph will develop into something really special.

Four songs, one of which is a death metal ballad of sorts, is what you get for your £2.50/\$6, and I'm sure you can have "Inscriptions" put on the end if you ask Mike nicely. Epitaph, 5 Sykes Road, Soothill, Batley, West Yorks WF17 0PU, England.

BEYOND FEAR (UK) - "Dreaming of Pure Carnage" demo '95

A rather deceptive acoustic intro lures us gently into the opening few minutes of Beyond Fear's second demo before a portcullis of barbaric death metal comes crashing down and we're left at the mercy of true speed and brutality.

I was somewhat taken aback when first confronted with this Kentish outfit in March or thereabouts. A track someone had taped me from their debut tape sported a remarkable likeness to Grave and Cannibal Corpse, and this coming from a UK band was bewildering to say the least. Still, they somehow managed to slip my mind until late July when, upon returning from my holiday in Ireland, I was pleasantly surprised by a copy of demo number two. Well, *shocked* would be a better way of putting it...

You see, us Brits aren't used to hearing over-the-top death metal from our own shores, especially not of the quality and conviction that Beyond Fear display. For some reason I was constantly reminded of early Marduk throughout, but Cannibal Corpse are probably where the lads have taken their main cue from and that's okay with me. For once, it seems, this style has been merged with the power and intensity required to keep me interested for more than two minutes, which is lucky because Beyond Fear's songs are all rather long.

Yep, I like and recommend them. Well worth hearing if you take even the slightest interest in death metal, and I'm sure even those of you who have "grown out of it" will see and appreciate "Dreaming of Pure Carnage" as the feast of fine brutality that it is. £2.50/\$6 from Jon Betts, Wake Robin, Wamford Road, Orpington, Kent BR66 1W, England.

DEATH AGONY (Sco) - Rehearsal/demo 2 '95

There's no two ways about it: Death Agony are fucking madmen! I mean, who in the right mind would use waltzes and whistles alongside Napalm-inspired grind? Only us Scots, is all I can say. And it's true, for what other nation would dare to take the piss so enthusiastically whilst retaining absolute seriousness when it comes to the actual delivery of the music?

Yeah, I guess it is pretty stupid, but what's a little stupidity between friends? I know I'd rather listen to quarter of an hour of this than, say, an album's worth of straight-edge pop punk.

Grindcore for me lost its appeal years ago, but DefAg, especially in a live environment, still have the primitive late eighties charm that made life slightly less unbearable for all of us a while back. Their attitude is fairly cool too, as the snott-nosed politically correct stance that makes most of today's grind/hardcore so cretinous isn't anywhere to be found. Instead we get a whole load of garbled bollocks and song titles like "Excretioner" and "Braindeid". Cool.

Like I said, Napalm Death will no doubt spring to mind as soon as you pop this on; Terrorizer and Anal Cunt too, but it is the truly fucked up and rocked out jives that make this tape worthy of your attention. Not everyone will like it, but those that do will love it! A blank and an SAE or IRC to: Death Agony c/o John, 152 Hillend Crescent, Clarkston, Glasgow

G76 TXY, Scotland. Ask the bigman to record the first demo for you too.

CATASEXUAL URGE MOTIVATION (Jap) - "Rape Trauma Syndrome" demo '95

There's, like, a limit to how much of this sorta thing I can take, and I'm sorry to say that CUM's debut effort was well past it within minutes.

Whilst the occasional nibble of grindcore/grindgore or whatever you want to call it does provide those necessary vitamin supplements in my primarily death metal diet, mouthfuls of CUM are about as appetising as... well, mouthfuls of cum (not that I would know).

So, what makes "RTS" so unappetising for someone who has only just given a more than positive (and not the least bit biased) review to his countrymen Death Agony? Well, the drumming for starters. Let's face it people, drum machines suck. And I don't care if they can reach speeds unattainable by their human counterparts (although my wrist action is slick enough to give any computer a run for its money). Also, the songs themselves do not exactly display the character and variation that made those of the late-great goregodz Impetigo so memorable and hence do not for particularly pleasurable listening make.

Still, CUM do have a knack of being able to create some truly morbid and perverse putre-gargletoons, and I can imagine the more splatterfriendly among you really digging this tape. Personally, I did not.

If five songs of Carcass/Mortician/Gut-inspired mondo metal sounds like your thing feel free to order the demo for \$4 (world-wide) from Tomoko Kanai, 1-26-3-204 Miyagi, Adachi-Ku, Tokyo 120, Japan.

FEBRUARI-93 (Swe) - Promo '95

Cool, teacher metal from Sweden! Yep, you guessed it: another side project. A damned good one though, and far more interesting than some of the high profile cash-ins going about these days. Storm, for example.

Remember "Hargalaten" off In Flames' debut CD? Well, this is basically ten songs of the same, albeit with a slightly poorer sound due to the restrictions of a four-track. Daniel of Forlorn and Withered Beauty is partially responsible for this interesting experiment and describes his work as "Scarborough Fair" with a heavy drumbeat, distorted guitar and distorted bass". That pretty much hits the nail on the head, so if a '90s reworking of traditional folk songs (not all Swedish) sounds like your cup of tea you could do a lot worse than this 'ere promo.

At times mellower than trippy '70s prog-rock, at others not unlike the rowdy Viking beer metal of Fenriz's Isengard, Februari-93 provides a refreshing change from the melodic'n'screamy Swedish dodsmetal we've all become accustomed to of late. Occasionally the vocals sound ever so slightly flat, but this is by no means unforgivable, and for a recording that wasn't even meant to be taken seriously this promo tape is very impressive. Available for a blank and some postage (IRCs or dollars) from Dan's address which you'll find elsewhere.

PSYGEN (Ita) - "Manyal" cass. EP '95

Enigmatic Italian Eucharism. This lot started out as Poseidon, according to their short-but-sweet bio sheet, and recorded a tape called "Dead 'n' Buried" before wisely changing their name. And style, I presume.

"Manyal" is pretty damn good, actually. Full of melody and ambition, and a darn sight more interesting than the Italian norm at any rate. Psygen have added a certain Swedish flavour to their techno-death/thrash which, whilst not the most innovative idea, does them a lot of favours as far as tunefulness is concerned.

Varied vocal styles and tempos, spooky riffs... it's all there, really, or at least it is on paper. Heaviness ain't, though, and that's pretty much the main problem I have with "Manyal". It seems they have been unfortunate enough to land themselves with the ultimate in tin-can productions, no doubt thanks to some Neanderthal of a sound engineer, and because of this the sound's general shitiness tends to detract from the music. Shame, that.

Anyways, I think that with a slightly more listener-friendly approach to both knob-twiddling and songwriting (most of the enjoyable riffs don't really get a look in) Psygen might well have something going for themselves.

The band can be contacted c/o Pacini Leonardo, Via G. Lanza 54, 50136 Firenze, Italy, and you'll have to send your six dollars to the label address, which is as follows: Monument Records, Via Pasquali 27, 50135 Firenze, Italy.

SOLSTAFIR (Ice) - "I Nordri" demo '95

From the Land of Fire and Ice come Solstafir, who, incidentally, play music that is both fiery and icy. "Icelandic

Viking Metal" said their flyer and, being a not-so-avid fan of Isengard's particular brand of the Norwegian equivalent, I promptly ignored it. A few months later, and by pure coincidence, sticksman Gudmundur dropped me a line, asking whether or not I'd like a copy of the demo. Grudgingly, I must admit, I replied in the affirmative and was all the more surprised when the tape turned out to be a fairly fresh and enjoyable one.

Thankfully, the Reykjavikans sound nothing like Fenriz's self-humiliations, coming closer to Burzum's more recent records and early In The Woods... than anything else. The picture they paint is not a particularly cheerful one and, like I said, smacks of "Hvis Lyset Tar Oss" in places. Keyboards are used sparingly and to great effect; the vocalist, whilst somewhat stuck in a rut stylistically, does an adequate job and Gudmundur's drumming is efficient enough. Character and identity are slightly lacking, but I have a feeling there is enough talent and enthusiasm coursing through the veins of the three to ensure that these elements will slowly begin to take hold on future studio outings.

Sound-wise a little shaky, but I have a feeling that this had more to do with my tape than anything else. Besides, it's the music that counts, and if desolate and barbaric Viking (read: black) metal is your poison you could do a lot worse.

\$5 from GO Palmason, Seljabraut 36, 109 Reykjavik, Iceland.

DEADLOCK (UK) - "The Way It Is..." demo '94

Oh man, does this ever sound dated! I'd better not write much about Deadlock, as it'd just be unkind. In the immortal words of Thumper's dad in Bambi, "If you don't have anything nice to say don't say nothing at all!"...

Unless I'm very much mistaken, this is some sort of a cross between hardcore and thrash, but with that I don't mean Machine Head or whatever. No, this is far more in the eighties vein; like DRI perhaps... Whatever it is, I'm am neither informed nor into whatever it is Deadlock play enough to appreciate or like "The Way It Is..."

Strikes me as being a bit on the short side too, as there are only two medium-length tracks on the tape, which is no doubt for the best.

I can't give you a price because I myself wasn't given one, but you can find out by writing to the band at this address: Flat B, 9 Alexandra Road, Oldham OL8 2BG, England.

HARMONY (Swe) - "The Radiance from a Star" cass. MLP '95

Yes, well. You can probably guess what sort of music Harmony (now Torment, incidentally) play and thus anticipate my reaction to it. In fact, why don't you just write the review yourself? That sure as hell would save me a lot of grief... No. Let's be sensible here. In fact, I'll start all over again.

Six tracks of melodic black/death metal - take it or leave it. Personally I'd probably leave it if I had the choice but seeing as I didn't and was sent a copy to review I may as well try and describe exactly why you, honourable reader, should take it. Or leave it, as the case may be.

Let's see... there are some strong melodies present, which is nice. Unfortunately, most of these aren't really given a chance to shine as nine times out of ten they are faded out or just left hanging in mid air. I hear some elements of mid-eighties thrash in there too, but once again the band seem quite content to hint at them and no more. A shame really, as In Flames have proven that this (when done well of course) for intense and enjoyable listening makes.

What else... oh yeah, influences. Um, Dark Tranquillity is one and I'd say that Darkthrone is probably another. Nowt surprising, in other words. And, in fact, that is pretty much the overall impression I got from "Radiance...". Like I said, take it or leave it. There are better bands around, but I would keep my eye on Harmony - sorry, Torment - as I have a feeling that with a slightly better production and more listener-friendly arrangements they could become a force to be reckoned with.

£3/\$6 from Deviation Records, 39 Carfin Road, Newarthill, Motherwell ML15JZ, Scotland.

Stop press: Mark of Deviation records has kindly donated ten free copies of the tape and told me to come up with some sort of a Harmony/Torment competition. Well, I can't think of anything to ask, so whoever can come up with the most amusing question and answer it correctly gets one. Cool, huh!

MORPHOSIS (Ire) - "Malicious Malfiguration" demo '95

Devastating. Arguably the most powerful demo of 1995, and it's from fairly close to home, too. Forget your all-American redneck/mosh/slamcore bands, forget their Southern European plagiarists... Morphosis is all you need, and I'm not bullshitting you just because their guitarist bought me a pint when I met him in Dublin town centre.

Numerous line-up changes have no doubt hindered Vinnie O'Brien along his path to death metal greatness, and it seems unfair that shite like Reincarnation have CDs on the market while others like Morphosis have been slogging away for years, but that's the difference a few blowjobs can make... Ahem.

Musically it is - on paper - unsurprising, as there are all the usual influences in here. However, it is the band's pulverizing intensity that makes all the difference. Only Cryptopsy are capable of creating equally crushing tunes with such conviction and relentless pace, and I'd even go so far as to say that this Irish lot are one of the top five death metal bands in Europe at the moment.

Professionally packaged with a crystal clear sound, "Malicious Malfiguration" is like a breath of fresh air - or a nailed boot in the face - to a scene that is by and large too busy posing or thinking up interesting new definitions to care for its appreciators. Morphosis have everything I look for in a death metal band nowadays, and you'd be a fool not to lend them an ear.

\$6 from Vinnie O'Brien, 13 Key Park, Lucan, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

TANAHAUZER (Fra) - "Return to the Dark Ages" demo '94

Quite frankly, I wish Tanahauzer would return to the dark ages. The dark ages of death metal that is, as they sure as hell ain't pulling their weight as far as modern day musical monstrosity goes.

Well, that's not entirely true... I mean, they're all fairly competent musicians for starters. Steph's guitar work especially is outstanding, but unfortunately the songs themselves are not. Perhaps it's a genuine lack of experience or motivation, but I have a sneaking suspicion that it is France's apparent inability to produce anything worthwhile in the metal genre (hell, in any genre) that makes this tape so mediocre. You know, the age-old problem of - shall we say - "second rate" counties that never had much to offer in terms of truly influential outfits in the eighties (see also Spain, Portugal and Belgium, for example).

I dunno... I guess the potential's there, but it really is up to the lads themselves to pull the collective finger out and try a bit harder. There are some nice acoustic guitars and keyboard parts in some songs, so maybe these will be the key to Tanahauzer's success, but as it stands there's a long way to go. Still, if slow melodic death is your thing and you fancy looking a bit further than your usual sources, I suppose you could do worse.

\$4 from Tanahauzer, 44 Rue Honors Laporte, 65430 Soues, France.



Tanahauzer: "French"

COLLAPSE (UK) - "From Another Place" demo '95

Those amongst you with a trainspotter mentality may have noticed that Collapse used to be Decomposed and, until a few months ago, were signed to Candlelight Records and were also rather slow and boring. So, what the fuck has caused them to change so dramatically?

Anyway, if I were to really sit down cross-legged and think of a primary influence on Collapse, it would probably be Confessor, although Collapse have sensibly avoided mimicking Scott Jeffreys, whose irritating vocal style was guaranteed to assure Confessor a distinct lack of commercial success.

As I'm a prickly little bastard, I'm going to have to think of one problem with this tape. However, to be honest, there's nothing wrong with this tape. Collapse have found their niche with this kind of alternative, very technical music and they definitely have the ability to pull it off. However, Collapse

clearly try to overdo the technical aspect of their music, churning out 7/8 riff after 7/8 riff, and I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of listeners find it hard to stomach twenty odd minutes of this stuff. As for those amongst you who used to love Decomposed (and some of you probably still do), steer clear of this tape as you won't appreciate the change.

This tape costs (I think) £2/\$4, so send your dosh to: Collapse, PO Box 4557, London SW20 8XJ, England. (Hans Stiles)

SKARTBURG RISING (UK) - "Prophecy of the True Horn" demo '95

I was sorely tempted not to review this at all when I first got it, as it truly is nothing more than a waste of my time. Instead, I'll be as brief as possible so as not to take up much space.

Braindead black metal (or "true Skarborian black metal") from Scarborough, complete with mis-spelt logo, hand-written flyers and Bontempi drumbeats. It is unclear whether or not these guys are taking the piss, but if they are the joke is either so stupid or so sophisticated that it isn't funny. I'd be inclined to go with the former theory, as every second of "Prophecy of the True Horn" sounds to me like prime Metal Hammer reading, Cacophonous Records loving, pre-pubescent musical bedroom delinquency, if you catch my drift. Fucking stupid, in other words. If you really must, send £1.50/\$5 to Martin Greenall, 74 Prospect Mount Road, Scarborough, N. Yorks YO12 6EN, England.



UNEARTHLY (Ire) - "Infinite Enigma" cass. EP '94

A never-to-appear 7" release by the ill-fated and much-hated Euthanasia Records from Northern Ireland. Some of you might remember Alan Gill and his band Agonist from last issue. Well, it turns out that he was a complete rip off and had offered these guys a deal with Shiver Records under the pretence that he was Hans' man in the UK. Anyway, his former partner Paul McClure had to wade through a ton of shit before finally clearing things up with Unearthly, and the vinyl plans of course fell through. Instead, the two tracker was pressed onto a tape with a photocopied cover and received some fairly decent reviews before it finally dropped into my lap (literally) while I was over in Ireland last summer.

So what do I make of it? Well, it's okay. The sound is typically Irish, i.e. shite, but the music itself is strong enough. Paul Lynch, guitarist/vocalist, is a big fan of Floridian techno-death, and that has naturally rubbed off onto his songwriting. I was reminded of demo-period Cynic and Atheist a little, as well as some of the widdier Swedish bands. Bill of Anatomia compared them to In Flames in his third issue, but I wouldn't exactly go quite that far. The musicianship isn't up to the same standard, nor are the songs themselves, but I guess that can be remedied with a little more practice. And that's where the problem lies. See, they don't have a drummer anymore, and Paul has been advised to refrain from playing and/or listening to loud music by his doctor. Bummer. Oh well, the best of luck to them anyway...

You'd better write to Paul and enquire about the tape's availability, as I'm not sure whether it's still on sale or not. Here be his address: Paul Lynch, Churchtown, Camdonagh, Co. Donegal, Ireland.

CARNAL RAPTURE (Ita) - Promo '94

Yuck - progressive techno death/thrash. This type of thing is generally only done well by a select few bands, and Carnal Rapture isn't one of them.

Their 1994 promo is about as heavy as it is fresh and interesting, and even though Atheist's debut is one of my all-time favourite LPs it left me stone-cold. There is absolutely no need for an Italian Death circa "Individual Thought Patterns", I'm afraid, and that is precisely who Carnal Rapture are trying to be.

Their refusal to sell out to the latest trends is admirable, but it isn't going to do them many favours if they continue on this, their chosen path of lameness and irritating complexity.

Nope, not the best tape I've been sent to review. You might enjoy it if Mr Shuldiner's recent offerings get you wet, but it's nothing out-of-the-ordinary or above average.

Carnal Rapture c/o Emilio Trillo, Via Zeusi, 20-00124 Roma, Italy.

DEAD INTENT (Aus) - "So May We Die" demo '95

Yaaaaaaawwn. Australian thrash metal - don't you just love it? I don't, I'm afraid, and that is exactly why Dead Intent registered very high on the Cryptic Scale of Boredom.

Some bands are great at reinvoking that classic period in the eighties when jeans were tight and hair was curly, but Dead Intent aren't one of them. They have neither the musical forte nor the necessary intensity to stand out from the already thinning crowd and do themselves no favours by rehashing the works of Testament and Kreator.

Production-wise the tape is above average, sounding fairly raw and aggressive. However, without the actual tunes it all seems rather bland and uninspired, and I doubt even the most enthusiastic thrashers out there will greet "So May We Die" with much glee.

If you *must* hear it, you can get the tape from Hot Rock Management at PO Box 171, Bexley 2207, Australia. I wasn't given a price, so you'll have to find that out for yourselves...

PUTREFY/ALTERED VISION (N. Ire/Ita) - Split cass. MLP '94

After 1993's extremely impressive (or should that be impressively extreme?) "Presumed Dead" demo, Northern Ireland's Putrefy have made a promising comeback in the shape of this little split release. Sound-wise things could have been better I suppose, but the raw, down-tuned and brutal underground feel has been effectively captured throughout the three featured tracks ("Intestinal Vomit", "Carved Up Bitch" and "Cryonic Zombies"). Okay, so the musicianship ain't the greatest but for a sophomore recording the guys have done quite well really. More akin to Immolation or Incantation these days, as opposed to their earlier stabs at Cannibal Corpse, Putrefy play to maim and fall only slightly short. It is ironic, then, that they split up some time ago. Ah well, shit happens...

Let's just hope that a similar fate doesn't befall Altered Vision, as they are by far the superior of the two acts. In contrast to Putrefy's rather basic death/gore, they have created some truly innovative music. Technical (but not obnoxiously so), well played and most of all melodic, the Italian quartet plays its very own brand of progressive metal with a flair seldom surpassed south of Sweden. Massimo's growls and Omar's clean vocals are perfectly complimented by the beautiful female voice of a Miss Deborah Suman, and the impressive lead work enables the two songs to flow smoothly by in a flurry of stylish riffing. Almost in the league of Cynic or recent Death, I'd say; let's just hope the label bosses see it the same way!

Get this tape for \$5 from Behemoth Productions, Via C. Menotti 51/1, 16154 Sestri P, Genova, Italy.

DESECRATION (UK) - "Gore and Perversion" cass. LP '95

This one was originally intended to be released as a self-financed CD but was seized by the Obscene Publications people in the summer. How death metal music can be seen as offensive I do not know, but that's the government for you. Anyway, the band took it upon themselves to put out the rough mixes as a second demo-cum-cassette LP, and here it is.

I found it disappointing, to be honest. Their first tape I adored, probably because of the fact that nobody else in the UK was playing anything sicker, faster or more down-tuned at the time of its release. But now... I couldn't really care less for gore metal, if the truth be known. Don't get me wrong, it's great fun if done well, but Desecration don't really do it well at all. "Gore and Perversion" is poorly written and played, badly produced and over-long. Few - if any - of the riffs are particularly memorable, and most of the tracks drift into exactly the sort of monotony that makes American bands so dull. Vocalist and lyricist Ollie Jones excels himself once again in both banality and stupidity, and his texts aren't a patch on Impetigo's.

Cannibal Corpse is once again the primary motivation, especially vocally, and I detected various nods at old Cabbage too. However, the overall result is not impressive enough to warrant repeated listens, let alone a CD release by Arctic Serenades. Over-enthusiastic supporters of the UK scene might enjoy this release, but there really is far better stuff on the market at the moment. £3/\$6

from PO Box 23, Newport, Gwent NP9 8YG, Wales.

ZARAZA (Can) - "Life is Death Postponed" demo '94

Wow, heavy. Can't say it appeals to me, though. Industrial has never really been my thing, really, unless it is done exceptionally well, and even then I can only handle it in small doses. What Zaraza create is intolerable, basically.

They call what they play "Unholy and Epic Noise Inferno of Doom", which is a pretty fair description, I suppose. So is incoherent blackened repetitiveness. I dunno, it's just not my sort of thing. The band's sound consists of creepy orchestrated passages superimposed over repetitive drum machine beats topped off by gruff vocals and samples. Weird and frightening it most certainly is, but enjoyable?

Real fans of industrial music might find it interesting, but all in all "Life..." is just too disjointed for my liking. I think I'll stick with "Streetcleaner". \$7.50 from Slavic Blasphemy Records, PO Box 845, Station C, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2L 4L6.

SUFFERING (UK) - "A Tangled Web of Despair" demo '94

Aaargh, those damned drum machines! If it wasn't for that, Suffering's debut tape might actually be a bearable listen. I'm not saying that it's unbearable as it is, but you know how I feel about those fucking little black boxes...

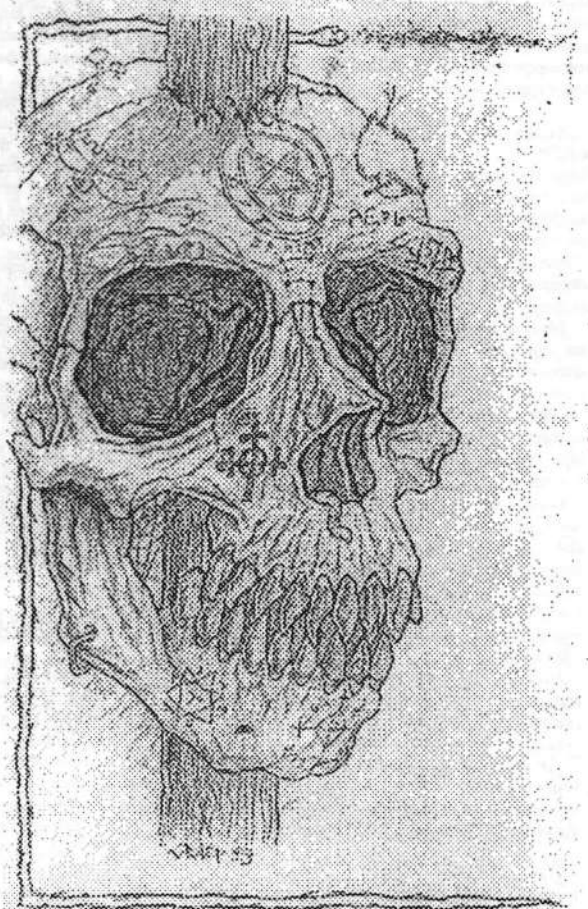
Musically this Cockney quintet are fairly average but do an adequate job of being a British death metal band. Their riffing is basic and not all that inspiring, to be honest, but they have a great Autopsy guitar sound. Fluke probably, but who cares? Other influences include Bolt Thrower, Slayer, and I detected the odd hint of Amorphis in some of Mike's melodic leads. Some of the songwriting is a little naive, but that seems to be the case with almost every debut tape from this country. However, there are some promising moments here and there, and I can imagine songs like "Worthless Existence" working quite well in a live environment.

There is a lot of room for improvement, and now that a full line-up has been established (the tape was recorded as a threesome, whereas there are five of 'em now) this won't be too much of a problem. Should you buy "A Tangled Web...", then? No, not really. Or at least I wouldn't. The sound and packaging are very poor, but the music is not wholly without promise. Besides, I think Grey (vox) has stopped selling the thing anyway. Send him a blank tape and some postage, and he'll record it for you.

Suffering c/o Grey, 141 Montague Road, Leystone, London E11 3EW, England.

TERMINUS (UK) - "Vision" demo '95

Crisp thrash/hardcore from England that sounds as if it would



appeal to the readership of Kerrang a lot. I refuse to follow everyone's lead and call Terminus a death metal band because... well, because quite simply they are not what I'd call a death metal band.

Recent Sepultura springs to mind, which is not a particularly good thing in my opinion. Nor are lyrics such as these: "Soulsucker a part of you motherfucker lies inside you / soulsucker he will suck your mind motherfucker he will / fuck you blind" (from the track of the same name). There's not a whole lot of soul in Terminus' music, but plenty of the other thing.

The production is quite clean, which I suppose is a refreshing change from the English norm. However, the guitar sound is about as heavy as Clawfinger's and the vocals are way too high in the mix (no surprises there). My advice to the band: a) get heavy b) stop listening to Rage Against the Machine and c) stop calling yourselves death metal - it's giving the genre a bad name.

Sorry (to the person who sent me this), I wish I could be more positive, but there is little point in lying. "Vision" is nicely packaged and presented, adequately played and well meant, but it really does s.f.a. for me. £3.75 from Ben Phillips, Temple House, 257 Boxley Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2AS, England.

ORDOG (Sco) - "17.19.20" demo '95
Demo number three for Scotland's only noteworthy black metal band - no mean feat, given the trio's outstanding laziness and lethargy. Still, there has definitely not been any slacking in the songwriting department.

Perhaps not quite as 'Scotish' sounding as you may expect, Ordog's musical creation is a bleak and unwelcoming one, and "winter landscape music" (as the band term their tunes) as good a description as any. Why, then, should you investigate further? After all, there are thousands of similarly inclined outfits the world over. Ah, but there aren't: the keen ear will soon pick up on the subtleties that lend "17.19.20" both style and character.

Whilst remaining within the basic black metal framework, Ross (drums) and the boys explore somewhat weirder avenues no doubt influenced by a musical diet that consists of more than your basic Satanrock. Also conducive to experimentation and innovation is their peculiar recording technique (songs jammed live in the rehearsal studio and canned after two or three takes), but don't be put off: the sound quality does suck quite a bit, yes, but it isn't much worse than some of the CDs going about these days and is certainly above average as far as black metal demos go. And no, I'm not being biased.

Enigmatic, obscure and very, very bleak. You could do far worse, believe me! I don't think Ross is all that keen on mail, so if you'd like a copy of the tape you'd best drop Aesthetic Death Distribution a line at Silwood, Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcs WR10 3AP, England. "17.19.20" will cost you £2 in the UK, \$4 in Europe and \$5 elsewhere.

SEDUCTER (USA) - "Trials and Tribulations" cass. LP '94

Yeah! Okay, three guesses... These guys come from the South, have song titles like "Well Enough Alone" and "Snapping of the Chord", and a bald singer. Yessireebob, somebody wants to be Pantera.

Well, that's perhaps being a little too hasty, but at the first glance the North Carolina quartet appears to be just another brick in the wall of plagiarism. And at the second. And at the third. Now, call me narrow-minded, but to me the outdated-sounding power/thrash Seducter play is neither credible nor enjoyable and it certainly isn't contributing anything of value to a genre on which has been its last legs for several years now.

According to the bio sheet, the band has gigged with such luminaries as Fight, Overkill, Prong and the Infectious Grooves in their time. Nice, but not exactly anything to boast about, is it? Sorry guys, but I find American bands hard enough to take seriously without the likes of Seducter.

If it's powerful thrash you're looking for I'd advise an investment in some Inquisitor or a Progress Records release instead. \$5 to Seducter, 4625 Murray Hill Road, Charlotte, NC 28209, USA.

VARIOUS - "Cold, Grey and Dead" volume 1

Features: Beyond Fear, Cause & Effect, Condemned, Dark Heresy, December Moon, Desecration, Esoteric, Evoke, Head Wound, Hexecution, Lightning, Mind Field, Morbid Symphony, Putrefy, Salem Justice, Serenade, Suffering, Terminus and Vomitorium.

One of, if not the best compilation I've heard from this country, CG&D covers a wide spectrum of British bands, most of which even I wasn't familiar with. Probably that age-old musical anti-patriotism problem, but still... Perhaps not the most interesting of tapes to buy if you reside within the UK, but pretty much essential listening for all you dirty foreigners looking to get a taste of the action here. 'Course, the fact that most of our bands are actually shit doesn't seem important.

The sound quality sucks a little, but the cover is tidy enough

likes this in times like these; it means someone out there still cares (sniff)...

This is not the voice of patriotic bias speaking either, in case you're wondering. Take one listen to "Castellated Architecture" and tell me that Engulfed aren't everything a death metal band should be. Support!

£3/\$6 from Dave Wood, 206 Croft Street, Galashiels TD1 3BB, Scotland.

MORSTICE (UK) - "Invoking the Storms" demo '95

Sounds like someone wants to be Swedish. Certainly, Morstice '95 display all the trademark riffs, screamy vocals and song titles, but are they actually any good at it? Well, I let one of my Swedish pals hear the demo and here's what he had to say: "Hey, what's this?! Sounds a bit Swedish, but not at all professional. No, the drummer must improve! Well, actually everything must improve. Maybe something for the future - if they learn to play properly and try to find a somewhat more original approach to this kind of music." I'm inclined to agree, actually. However, I wouldn't be quite as harsh in my judgement. Morstice are okay, but they aren't doing themselves many favours by trying so hard to sound like they come from Gothenburg.

"Invoking the Storms" is Morstice's third tape and their first since the departures of vocalist/bigmouth Steve Gillham and

carrot-top Wallis. Now it seems Sean (geetar) has left and Wallis has rejoined on keyboards, leaving the band minus a bass player and guitarist. With these I think there would be far, far more scope for development, providing the lads have got this Swedish thing out of their system. Like my buddy (who will remain anonymous) says, they should try to be themselves a bit more in the rehearsal studio. Also, I'd recommend some more work on the riffs.

Production-wise things sound pretty thin and tinny, but the overall result is far clearer than on previous efforts. Fans of the band will not be disappointed, despite the lessening of brutality, and quite a few new supporters will probably be gained in the UK. As for myself and the rest of the world, I think I'll wait 'til demo number four or whatever. Keep 'em coming, though, Morstis!

£2.50/\$5 from: Morstice, 35 Temperance Terrace, Ushaw Moor, Durham DH7 7PQ, England.

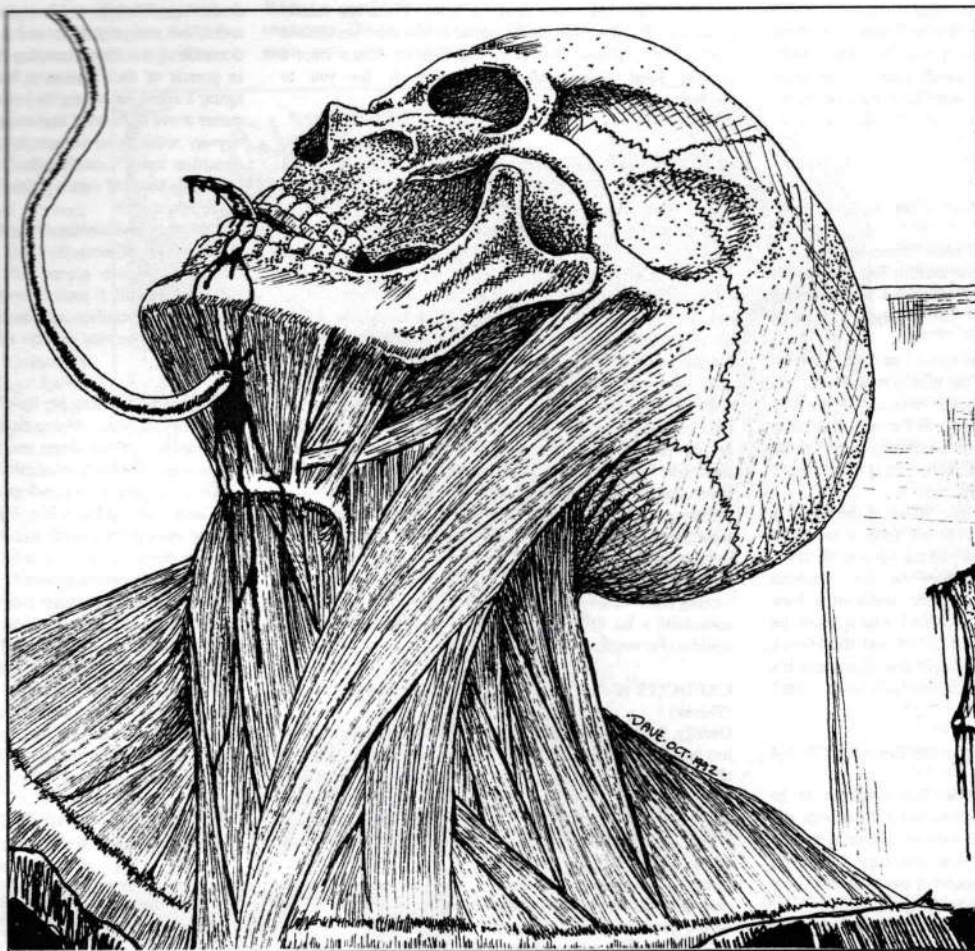
BODYBAG (USA) - "Pains from Nausea" demo '95

"A reckless assault of grinding death", eh? They certainly don't mince their words, these American fellers, do they? Now, let's see... Bodybag have a nice

logo in the 'dripping with gore' vein, which reminds me of Grave. So does their music, actually. What else... ah yes, the cover. It's a painting of a zombie coming out of the grave, which is the opposite of into the grave, which brings us back to Grave. Weird. There's also some Terrorizer-style grindcore in there, which has rubbed off more on the riffing than the pace of the songs and generally makes things more interesting. However, there are still a few speedier bits per song which work much to the band's advantage.

What's also nice is the absence of "mosh riffs" or "slam parts", two things which have gradually been turning the US death scene into one big self-humiliating, Internal Bleeding-plagiarising farce. The production is suitably raw and heavy, so that's a bonus, but the songs themselves require a little more work before they can really make me sit up and say "Yes! This is a great American death metal band". Nice try, though, I thought. Perhaps not everyone's cup of pus or Budweiser or whatever, but those of you who still enjoy the odd bit of brainless brutality and loathe getting in the pit (muthafucka) will no doubt find much about Bodybag intensely likeable.

I wasn't given a price, but you can write and find out, no doubt (ha, such poetry...). Bodybag, 4335 SE Main, Portland, OR 97214, USA.



and gives you all the necessary addresses. I think Grey (compiler and Suffering vocalist) is asking £1.50/\$4 for it, so you get good value for money too.

Cold, Grey & Dead c/o Grey, 141 Montague Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3EW, England.

ENGULFED (Sco) - "Castellated Architecture" advance demo '96

Six tracks of death the ancient way, or at least the early nineties way, courtesy of Scotland's premier Stockholm enthusiasts. Actually, it's only vocalist/guitarist Dave Wood that treasures the Skogsbergian buzz so, but seeing as it is he who writes the large majority of Engulfed's riffs the fact that the other two members would rather listen to Saxon seems unimportant.

"Castellated Architecture" is a big improvement from their - shall we say, for the sake of courtesy - lesser debut tape, and I mean BIG. The band is understandably far more together after umpteen thousand live appearances over the eighteen month gap between recordings, and Mr Wood's songwriting has progressed admirably.

Demo number two = pure and undiluted brutality; morbidity and violence; Entombment and Disembowelment. In other words, exactly the sort of death metal that I like and have liked ever since I was wee. It is only encouraging to receive tapes

Albums...

(or whatever)

NERGAL (Gre) - "The Wizard of Nerath" CD '95 (Unisound International)

Now you may accuse me of nit-picking, but as far as I'm concerned, all Greek black metal sounds like Rotting Christ, and Nergal are in no way an exception: the album was recorded at the Greek Morrisound, Storm Studios (which actually belongs to Rotting Christ, funny enough). So, I won't bore you by describing "Thy Mighty Contract" or "Non Serviam". Instead, I'll just say that if you like Greek black metal, albeit with rather ridiculous vocals that were no doubt produced with the aid of a red-hot poker inserted into a certain orifice, then check out Nergal, but all in all, hardly a classic I'm afraid.

(Hans Stiles)

IN THE WOODS... (Nor) - "Heart of the Ages" CD '95 (Misanthropy)

I bought In The Woods... "Isle of Men" demo last year and was more than impressed by what the weirdos from the forests of southern Norway were doing, so naturally I was expecting something a bit more special than your average black metal debut album.

That I got, although not quite as special as I was perhaps hoping for. You see, on the demo the primitive Bathory parts sounded perfect in conjunction with the more epic & operatic sections, but on the album they just get in the way. Sure, they are no doubt meant to a contrast the beautifully woven synth textures and all-out mountain metal, but when it comes down to it I find myself put off by their crudeness.

Apart from that quibble, I'd say that "Heart of the Ages" is as flawless a debut as could be expected from a bunch of obviously talented as ITW..., so don't let me put you off. If the band could perhaps concentrate more on the wondrous atmospheres of songs like "Yearning the Seeds of a New Dimension" (the first part thereof anyway) I'd be a whole lot happier. If you enjoy the likes of The 3rd and the Mortal, Decoryah or even Pink Floyd you'll adore this album, and it's likely that most intelligent black metallers (paradoxes - don't you love 'em?) will be satisfied too.

EMPEROR (Nor) - "In the Nightside Eclipse" CD '94 (Candlelight)

This probably was one of the most hyped albums to be released within the black metal scene, and I doubt that any other band in the genre will ever receive the same sort of attention as Emperor did. I mean, time after time the eagerly anticipated release of this was announced, but time after time we were let down and told it was to be delayed.

So, was it worth the wait? Yes! Of course it was. This is the black metal album. It is perfect in every way possible; just take one listen to "Into the Infinity of Thoughts" or "Towards the Pantheon" to confirm that. From beginning to end you are treated to a dose of classic black metal, played by one of the most talented bands in the genre. It is the use of keyboards here that gives Emperor that unique, powerful feeling... They lift you with all their might, taking you on a journey through desolate northern landscapes, while Faust creates a storm behind the kit and Samoth belts out those dark, raging riffs. All of this is accompanied by Ihsahn's hellish vocals which he spews forth with all his hatred.

There really is nothing else to be said about this masterpiece. It is for sure that in years to come it will be looked upon as a classic which it most certainly is. Unfortunately, due to various legal difficulties, the future of the Emperor horde remains very unclear, so I guess we will just have to wait and see what happens from here.

(Martin Kelso)

IMMOLATION (USA) - "Here in After" CD '95 (Metal Blade)

Thank you, Metal Blade, for providing this album, certified corpse paint free. Now whatever you do, please don't fuck up and sign Goatpenis or something.

For all those nice level-headed people who prefer good old fashioned, nasty, noisy death metal to the infantile screams of the world of penguins, Immolation are something of a godsend

(excuse the religious pun). This is pure and filthy death metal, and a logical successor to "Dawn of Possession". I won't waste space by describing Immolation. If you see yourself as a death metal fan you'll know what they sound like and hopefully love them.

Anyway, I haven't yet heard an album devoid of any faults, and "Here in After" does have its flaws. These are mainly production shortcomings, as the sound is just a bit too chaotic and messy in places. However, this doesn't detract from a fucking good album. All that remains is for you to buy/borrow/steal a copy.

(Hans Stiles)

SENTENCED (Fin) - "Amok" CD '95 (Century Media)

My my, look who's been listening to their Iron Maiden albums lately! After 1993's wonderful "North from Here" and the subsequent mini CD "The Trooper", the talented Finns have returned with what is perhaps one of this year's most outstanding metal releases.

One of the most surprising too, as many an unsuspecting fan will have no doubt discovered already. The band have moved wisely on from their previous melodic'n'screamy style which seems, unfortunately, to have become flavour of the month, and in the process have once again slain 90% of the opposition with their innovation. They've gotten slower, rockier and - believe it or not - even more melodic than before. Whether this new-found accessibility has anything at all to do with their signing to Century Media I have no idea, but they've certainly succeeded in creating one helluva a mature metal album.

Okay, so "Amok" may not be the most brutal of records, but what Sentenced have lost in extremity they've gained ten-fold in class and style. At times almost sympathetically moody, at others harsh and bitter, this is one CD you'll find yourself coming back to over and over again. If you're looking for something a bit different and mellower than the norm you could do far worse. Go on, treat yourself!

CADUCITY (Bel) - "The Weilian Wielder Quest" CD '95 (Shiver)

Usually, I think that it sucks a little to mark an album down just because you don't like the production, but in this case I'm afraid the, at best slightly odd, snare drum sound on this CD is just a little bit too grating, drowning out the rest of the kit, so that a lot of nuances are lost, especially during fast blast parts.

That said, Caducity can certainly play. A lot of this album, whilst not blindingly fast, is certainly up-tempo and some parts are pretty technical to boot, so it's good to see that the band can handle their material with ease.

As for the music itself, Caducity play death metal pure and simple, with a sprinkling of keyboards, acoustic parts and clean vocals and an overall sound that owes more than a little to traditional Heavy metal.

Whilst Caducity aren't exactly going to set the world on fire with this album, it certainly sits at a reasonable position on the death metal ladder.

(Hans Stiles)

MEMORY GARDEN (Swe) - "Forever" MCD '95 (Heathendom Music)

Okay, so I'll admit it: I like *some* doom metal. Not just any lame-assed, whining Sabbath rip-off doom metal, though. I mean *real* doom metal. Memory Garden play *real* doom metal and that is why I like them. Simple, eh?

Basically, everything about

this release just reeks of all things Candlemass. Nobody seems to have told the band about originality and its merits, but that's okay. Memory Garden have class and style, and I know for a fact that those tend to outweigh weirdness and innovation for the sake of it in these days of overcrowding and hapless plagiarism.

If, like me, you enjoyed the band's 1993 demo and the "Blessed Are the Dead" EP that followed, you will not be disappointed. "Forever" isn't particularly miserable really, just metal as fuck.

Four marvellously produced tracks of Swedoom can be yours for a mere \$10 (world-wide) from the label address or any self-respecting distro.

PYOGENESIS (Ger) - "Twinnaleblood" CD '95 (Nuclear Blast)

Hmm. One half of me wants to throw back my head and laugh at Pyogenesis for being pretentious little wimp/sell-outs who lack the masculinity to continue playing death metal and the other wants to glance uneasily over my shoulder and shuffle a little closer to the stage.

If you're looking for another "Ignis Creatio" you can fuck off, basically, as you won't be getting one. The only fire you'll see near "Twinnaleblood" is the stuff Messrs. Tim, Flo, Roman and Wolle are playing with in putting out an album like this.

You see, I can't imagine too many people actually putting down their Offspring or Green Day records to pick this one up and take it seriously. Nor can I see hordes of newly converted doom/death metallers sweeping the plains of open-mindedness in pursuit of their one-time favourites' latest vision. Then again, I could be wrong. It just seems like a bit of a shaky career move for a band that wasn't exactly leader of the pack anyway suddenly to assume that it will be able to make the transition from "Lost Paradise"-revisited to, and I quote, "a refreshing blend of metal, gothic, punk and grunge" without so much as a scratch.

Fuck it, "Twinnaleblood" is far better than "Waves of Erotasia" or "Sweet X-Rated Nothings", and even the obligatory German accent fails to detract from the sheer ballsiness of it all. If you can overcome the death metal dogma of anti-commercialism and musical snobbery for about fifty minutes then you may well get a few decent foot-taps out of it. I did.

GWAR (USA) - "Rag Na Rok" CD '95 (Metal Blade)

Aw, come on guys... Please do not subject us to any more of this crap. It is neither clever nor funny; it is embarrassing. This is low even by Gwar's standards, and that is saying something.

We all laughed at "Scumdogs of the Universe" and thought how cool it was to have, like, blood and stuff on stage and be banned and to have a chick with big spikes on her thingies, but that was then; this is now, and we are no longer twelve years old. Hell, even twelve year-olds would find "Rag Na Rok" an insult to their pre-pubescent intelligence. You know what this is like? It's like a loud, bloated and desperately unfunny relative telling bad joke after bad joke at the dinner table, only to be greeted with an awkward silence.

In a painful attempt to analyse the little music there is to be found on this, the band's fifth(!) record, all I can come up with is a sort of half-baked attempt at sleaze rock/punk, completely devoid of wit and intelligence. Gwar, please fuck off and die. And stop making albums, for *all* our sakes!

MOLEST (Bel) - "Milkfish" CD '95 (Progress)

"Belgian psychedelic hardcore with a sensational debut



album" sez Progress Records' Molest info sheet. "Fuck off" sez a certain 'zine editor, open-minded as ever, tossing the unfortunate disc into the *Mmm, I really must check these guys out sometime* corner. Thinking nothing of it, Mr Right-On goes about his business until one day the small circular lump of plastic, in a gallant attempt to save itself from a pending fate of dust and despondency, launches itself at the CD player and triggers the 'play' mechanism unbeknownst to its negligent owner.

How surprised the latter was, then, when he found himself actually quite enjoying what he was hearing. Okay, so the be-all-and-end-all of hardcore/metal/rap it ain't, but "Milkfish" is certainly a darn sight better than most of the lifeless crap the mainstream media would like us to believe is in some way exciting or refreshing.

If bullshit-free Biohazard sounds like your wettest dream come true, Molest may well be the answer to your prayers. There is only one foreseeable difficulty for the band and the label, but it is a big one: Who actually wants to hear this sort of thing from Belgium? I mean, how tough can life on the streets of Brussels be? I ask you...

EXPULSION (Swe) - "Overflow" CD '95 (Godhead)

So, Expulsion are back after all these years... Pretty much the only founding fathers of the Swedish death metal scene not to have been picked up at the turn of the decade, really. There has to be a reason for that, though, right? Right. They suck. That sounds brutal, I know, especially considering the fact that National Service commitments and various health problems have allegedly hindered the band in terms of creativity, but such mediocrity really is inescapable. Besides, everyone else in Sweden seems to have managed just fine.

What Diamember's debut lacked in individuality it made up for ten-fold in power and malevolence, which is more than can be said for Expulsion's, unfortunately. Much more. Like most "mature" death metal releases these days, "Overflow" spends too much of its time trying to avoid clichés and generally loses the thread rather a lot.

Strip down Paradise Lost's "Gothic" to the bare minimum, perhaps adding a few of its successor's ideas and some Black Sabbath riffs and you've a fairly accurate picture of where Expulsion are at today. Except, of course, that it's 1995 now and not, in fact, 1991.

The songs are devoid of the drive and intensity that gives current Swedish metal its bite and that, after all, is what people want. Or at least what I want. Plod, plod, plod... next track... plod, plod, plod. Know what I mean?

There are a few moments of promise, I guess, but overall I'd advise the guys not to rest on their laurels, as the children of Fredman and Unisound are eager to take over from dodgy metal dinosaurs like themselves.

TREND (Den) - "Bitch?" CD '95 (Progress)

I care so little about Denmark's latest failures Trend that it pains me to have to write a review of their first (and hopefully last) album. As if monotonous and moronic rapcore from the States wasn't enough, our Danish friends had to have their tuppence' worth too. Sorry, but I'm not playing.

You see, openly admitting to following trends like front 'man' Tim Lyngé boasts on the info sheet isn't cool or credible. It's stupid. So are lyrics about ugly women, respect and other sickeningly banal topics. *Who cares* if you like drinking and getting tattooed? Not I.

Trying to copy Clawfinger isn't a particularly good idea either. Much as I hate them, there is no denying their flair at writing extraordinarily catchy and effective songs, one of many skills their Danish counterparts lack.

These are sad times indeed when the best tracks on records are mutilations of other people's (in this case "I Feel You" by Depeche Mode), but with any amount of luck Trend's lame and uninspired ramblings will earn them all the success they deserve, i.e. none. Kerrang probably love them.

AT THE GATES (Swe) - "Slaughter of the Soul" CD '95 (Earache)

Like a diamond in the shit, At the Gates' Earache debut radiates musical genius with a brilliance unsurpassed. Time and time again they have proven themselves worthy of the death metal throne, and this, their fourth full-length, is by no means an exception to the rule.

1994's "Terminal Spirit Disease" saw the Gothenburg quintet strip down their sound to a more accessible but infinitely more effective level whilst retaining the sort of melodic malevolence that has spawned a thousand clones in

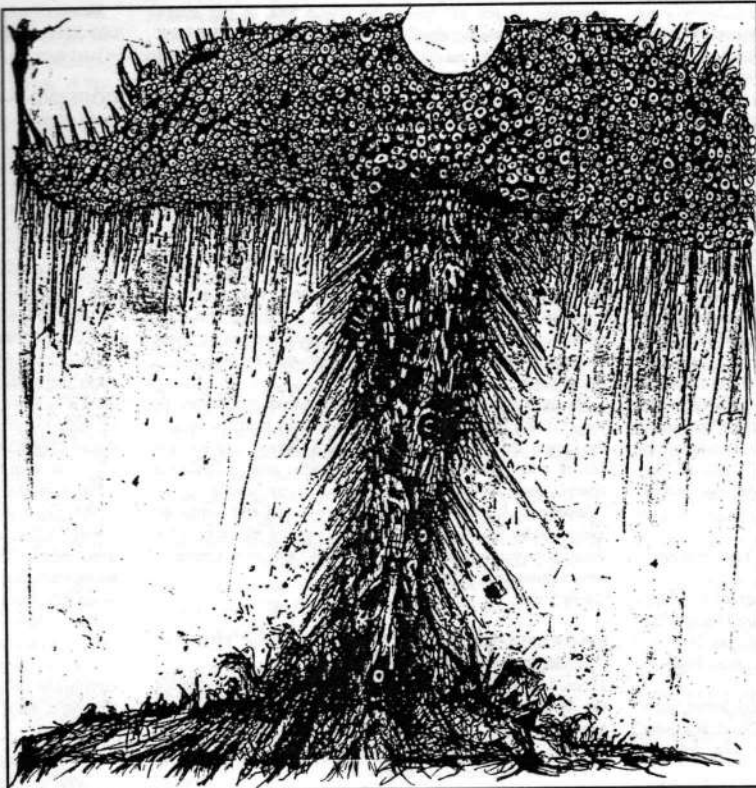
Sweden alone. "Slaughter of the Soul" is even more basic but all the more vehement for it. Angrier, heavier and slicker than ever before, At the Gates have honed their style to perfection, once again painting pictures of frustration, angst and bitterness. Straight forward and to the point, the riffing of Messrs Björler and Larsson is charged with both melody and fury but sounds a little more refined than on previous records. Tomas Lindberg howls out his lyrics with unprecedented venom and is a strong contender in my personal Vocalist of the Moment awards.

"Slaughter of the Soul" is undeniably the most exciting record Earache have released in a long, long time, and I sincerely hope that the new deal will help the band achieve the sort of status they deserve. Immense, intense and very, very necessary.

NIGHTFALL (Gre) - "Athenian Echoes" CD '95 (Holy)

Having never paid these Greeks much attention in the past, I was somewhat curious when this, their third full-length CD, fell onto the doormat one Thursday morning. A somewhat dire debut LP and the track I'd heard on the then most recent Terrorizer compilation disc had not exactly created the best first impression, so it was pleasantly surprising to find myself enjoying the opening few moments of album number three.

Unless I'm very much mistaken, things have gotten a tad speedier than before and this is a good thing, for I felt that much of their first record suffered from that classic My Dying Bride (or should that be My Dying Interest?) syndrome, i.e. monotony. The use of keyboards helps too, as the songs sound more epic and atmospheric. In fact, without the synths



Nightfall would be about as interesting as... well, their older material.

Bouncy little rock & roll ditties mingle with splendidly Greek guitar harmonies, creating a fairly unique and refreshing cocktail of power and melody. The riffs are catchy and memorable, the musicianship flawless and the packaging up to Holy's usual impeccable standards, so there's no reason why this shouldn't be lining your shelves alongside those Septic Flesh, Necromantia and Rotting Christ CDs... or is there?

Well, like Septic Flesh, the drums sound programmed (I'm not sure if they actually are but they might as well be) and are therefore unbearable at times. Also the song titles... "As Far as Love Hurts, I'll be Loving You 'till Your Death (I'm a Diamond)", "The Eastern Astral Vault; the Flaming Tiara on My Head (Monuments of its own Magnificence)"... No thanks!

Overall, then, a mixed bag. However, I'd say the good points well outweigh the bad, so don't let my nit-picking put you off. Nightfall is easily the best death metal band Greece has to offer at the moment and deserve your undivided attention. Their next album should be awesome, especially if they can rid themselves of the clickety-click drum sound.

BURZUM (Nor) - "Burzum/Aske" CD '95 (Misanthropy)

They say Hitler was a genius, and whilst I wouldn't go so far as to call Varg Vikernes a genius (nor flatter him by comparing him to one of his little idols), there is no denying that the lad has talent.

In spite of the difficulty I have in swallowing the large majority of his ideologies, I must admit that I enjoy all of his records immensely. "Burzum" and "Aske" are no exceptions to the rule, and it was a wise move on Diamanda's part to repress both of them onto one CD. Whilst some of our more conceited black metal friends may scream "Sell-out" at the top of their raspy little pre-pubescent voices, I can't see anything wrong with the idea. After all, DSP didn't exactly have the best distribution... Besides, everything has been given a lick of proverbial paint and one even gets a pretty digi-pack with the CD. The only thing missing is the free Burzum lighter, but that was kinda crappy anyway.

And what about the music, you quite rightly enquire? It is, of course, similarly impressive, but I trust most of you reading this know that already. There's everything from the dreamy "Channelling the Power of Souls into a New God" ("Tomhet" is your best reference point here if you are only familiar with album no. 3) to the all-out Venomness of "War", in my opinion one of the latter day black metal anthems.

Yep, it's all there and both records are just as relevant today as they were in the dawn of the unholy explosion of 1992/93. A must for any self-respecting neo-Norse warrior and worth investing in if you take even the slightest interest in the black metal scene of today.

MINDROT (USA) - "Dawning" CD '95 (Relapse/Nuclear Blast)

Massive. Crushing. Grinding. Grieving. *Dawning*.

The Dawning of a new era in Fine Grind, perhaps? Let's hope so, anyway. It would certainly do Relapse's credibility no harm whatsoever to release more atmospheric records like this one. Mindrot's debut sees the Californian quintet beginning to move away from their punishingly brutal roots and in a more gothic direction. Not necessarily the typical European way, though, so forget your Eternes and your Katatonias right now. Mindrot's gothicism is coupled with some of the most intense death/grind I've heard in a while. Difficult to imagine, but good.

Methinks the extremely weighty production helps, the drums in particular sounding ominous, thunderous and imposing. Bleak too, is the landscape painted by some truly monumental synths; not altogether unlike those to be heard on Fear Factory's latest. Actually, the 'Factory isn't too bad a reference point for some of the more pissed off moments on "Dawning", although Mindrot sound a lot less commercial.

Vocalist and lyricist Adrian Lereux is not a happy man. Forlorn moans and groans intermingle truly barbaric, angst-ridden roars. The guitars of Messrs. Kaufmann and Flood mirror this, combining melody with moroseness. Ooooooh baby.

I seriously doubt that "Dawning" will herald an American surge of creativity, diversity and musical intelligence, but I don't mind. It's one of the few bearable Stateside records around at the moment, and that alone should be reason enough for you to lend it an ear.

DARK HERESY (UK) - "Abstract Principles... Taken to their Logical Extremes" advance CD '95 (Unisound International)

Well, here it is... Dark Heresy's debut album. How does it fare in comparison to 1993's more than adequate "Diabolus in Musica" demo, then? More than adequately, I'd say.

Like the demo, talent and quirkiness prevails but this time the songs work far better. The riffs are strung together more thoughtfully and with more finesse, the tunes are catchier and more recognisable... Basically, everything about the record screams progression.

The Surrey quintet's sound is still impossible to describe - fortunately for them and unfortunately for you, the reader. There is something remarkably British about them... irony perhaps. What they play isn't necessarily heavy as in brutal, but it's far more interesting than most UK death metal. Actually, death metal isn't quite the right word for it anymore, but seeing as I have absolutely no idea what is it'll do for the moment. By mixing Rotting Christ-esque harmonies with obscure little melodies, DH have succeeded in creating a unique and brilliant style of their own. Skilful insertions of acoustic guitars, keyboards and clean vocals are merely the icing on the proverbial cake. Oh, and I was reminded of Skyclad every now and again (a good thing in my eyes). Not necessarily everyone's cup of tea, but I'll have a pot to myself, thank you very much.

You'd better write to Hans o' the four strings for more information, as I'm not certain when the album is/was released and how much it costs. His address is in the demo section...



INFERNAL TORMENT (Den) - "Man's True Nature" CD '95 (Progress)

Rrrroooooaarrrr... Duggaduggadugga... Yeeeeeuuurrrrrg! Yes indeed, ladies and gentlemen, "Man's True Nature" Suffocates and Cannibalises with all the characteristics of a mighty fine death metal debut.

Originality is sparse, but intensity prevails over the ten tracks and thirty or so minutes of musick on offer here. There is little else to separate brutal death bands in a genre so limited, and that is why the likes of Deranged, Cryptopsy and now also Infernal Torment can bear the banner of banality with such pride. Pounding snares, break-neck speeds and riffs that are not only powerful but profoundly and delightfully morbid make the five Danes truly stand out from the crowd. Their influences are easy to spot and not the least bit surprising, but the fact that they have managed to temper them with Scandinavian conviction makes all the difference.

The production is dense, heavy and effective; the vocals of Scott Jensen fittingly mimic the rumbling bass of Steffen Larsen and the lyrics match the artwork in both perversity and stupidity. If you relish North America's barbarity, you will find a home from home in Denmark.

There are no doubt better bands than Infernal Torment out there somewhere, but I don't feel the need to go looking for them. Fact of the matter is that "Man's True Nature" is one of the most enjoyable brutal death metal records I've heard in quite a while and an ample substitute for "Tomb of the Mutilated" should it ever go missing from my record collection.

INFERNAL TORMENT (Den) - "Man's True Nature" CD '95 (Progress)

Now this is probably the heaviest album I've heard in a long while. As the bio says, "Earache has Anal Cunt, Osmose has Impaled Nazarene, Nuclear Blast has Kataklysm, but Progress has Infernal Torment", and, to be honest, this band is definitely the heaviest of the lot.

Imagine Cannibal Corpse tuned down a little lower, with clearer vocals, more fast parts and much sicker lyrics. It's quite an easy style to envisage and this is exactly what Infernal Torment sound like.

However, I wouldn't be able to forgive myself if I didn't say something against some of the imagery on this album, which peddles that oh-so-fine line between offensive and 'funny in a sad, shit sort of way'. The album cover depicting a man buggering a woman with a garden fork in a childrens' playground is easily as bad as Sanctum's "Raped of Your Religion" album cover, and we all know just how fucking dire that was! Infernal Torment should ditch the sado image or at least do it properly like, say, Desecration. (Hans Stiles)

ILLDISPOSED (Den) - "Submit" CD '95 (Progress)

Progress' press release would like to have us believe that their number one death metal band has garnered a following akin to Beatlemania in their four years of existence. Somehow I found myself first raising a sceptical left eyebrow, then slipping into the comfortable sneer that so often creeps across my face when confronted with the majority of biography sheets these days.

Fortunately, for both band and label, the music on Illdisposed's second full-length (discounting the rather pointless collection of old and unreleased material that called itself "Helvede") is good enough to live up to its alleged reputation and hype. Just.

It's pretty strange, actually. On one hand you have the thundering double bass onslaught of new skinsman Rolf Hansen mixed with Bolt Thrower-cum-Obituary guitar grindings, yet on the other there's melody aplenty and fresh sounding riffs and ideas to boot. The vocals take a bit of taking used to, mind you, as effects and weirdness is the name of the game. John Tardy springs to mind on occasions, as does Bill

Steer, but overall I suppose Bo Summer has discovered a sound of his own.

Those of you expecting another "Return from Tomorrow" like I was will be disappointed at first, as controlled intensity has taken over from barbaric pace, but perseverance is rewarding. If you can ignore the idiotic rock & roll image (which, incidentally, should not be a problem as the band reputedly shun the media - they're probably too cool for that sort of thing) you will no doubt find much about "Submit" extremely enjoyable. By the way, ignore the interview introduction I wrote - I was in one of my moods again.

ILLDISPOSED (Den) - "Submit" CD '95 (Progress)

Right, let me see, dodgy rap crossover bands come from Sweden, shite black metal comes from Norway and totally brutal death metal comes from Denmark. Wrong! Whilst bands like Agonize, Invocator and Infernal Torment may have served to lump most Danish bands into the general brutal death pigeonhole, Illdisposed have progressed a great deal, so much in fact that they have produced an album that, fair enough, may be shit heavy, but is original and maybe even commercial enough to net them a bigger deal and some real recognition.

For those who have heard Illdisposed before, the trademark sound is still there: the deeper than humanely possible vocals, the insane blast beats and the mad solos. However, there is a hell of a lot more to the Illdisposed sound now, including a liberal dose of samples, clean and raspy vocals (a la "Testimony..." era Pestilence), keyboards and sometimes an almost rocky feel to the music. It may sound like a bit of a mess on paper, but believe me, it all works and what's more, it works damn well. (Hans Stiles)

SWORDMASTER (Swe) - "Wraths of Time" MCD '95 (Full Moon Productions)

Hmm. I have mixed feelings about Swordmaster's debut for the Floridian stable FMP (which, incidentally, I seem to always be confusing with Necropolis Records from the other side of the States). On one hand, the foursome's venomous and melodious mayhem (pun most definitely intended) is frightfully predictable and somewhat overshadowed by that of their countrymen Dissection and In Flames, yet on the other I found myself quite enjoying it, albeit grudgingly. This anti-American thing of mine is getting a little worrying, though. I mean, it has reached the point where I'm even beginning to greet European releases on US labels with more than a pinch of scepticism.

Getting back to Swordmaster, however, I must say I found the actual musical content of the record somewhat sparse, despite its undeniable quality. There are only two real songs on the thing, the other two being a rather pointless 'preview' of a track shortly to appear on the full-length album and a dumb outro. Can you say filler?

Original the Swedish four-piece is not, with influences ranging from the obligatory to the predictable. Like I said, comparable with and superseded by some of their more successful peers but promising nonetheless. However, I would wait for the soon-

to-appear album, as \$14 for under fifteen minutes of music is inexcusably expensive.

MOURNING SIGN (Swe) - "Mourning Sign" CD '95 (Godhead)

Forget Machine Head and Fear Factory! Mourning Sign are the only nineties metal band you need know about, and they don't require extensive marketing and Kerrang dedication to justify themselves either. Just talent, pure and simple.

I was turned onto this relatively unknown Swedish act a while ago by a trader-friend who recorded some of their 1993 promo tracks for me. These were later released by Godhead as a mini-CD ("Alienor") and immediately drew my attention to the band, as unlike most of their countrymen they were playing their own songs as opposed to someone else's. Combining melody with a brutality and technicality perhaps more readily associated with Stateside acts, Mourning Sign had created a sound and style of their own without straying too far into territories unknown and uncomfortable to the death metal scene at large.

Their self-titled debut album sees them continuing this progression, albeit with a great deal more confidence and clarity. Musically phenomenally intense, technical but catchy and direct, "Mourning Sign" kills in every sense of the word.

Controlled blast beats intermingle crunchy - dare I say - "mosh" sections, resulting in an adrenaline-fuelled audiopocalypse. Suitably 'busy' and melodious riffing keeps the listener interested and the Swede-metal purist happy, whilst front-man Robert Porschke varies his vocal excretions from off-pissedness-laden growls to soulful crooning.

Memorable, heavy and exciting, Mourning Sign are up there with Mindrot as the heralds of a new era in extreme metal, or at least they are for me.

GODSEND (Nor) - "In the Electric Mist" CD '95 (Holy)

Early attempts of mine to listen to this, Godsend's second CD, were thwarted by the woeful collection of recycled Saint Vitus riffs that is the opener "Down Upon You". However, perseverance revealed far more than I had expected. Or wanted to expect, for that matter.

Steering mercifully clear of current doom clichés for the most part, the Norwegians pass through various shades of melancholy barely even hinting at the sort of moonstoned moroseism the majority of their contemporaries display. A vast and effective strain of bleak and desolate metal clashes with dull Sabbathical tones. Fortunately, the former prevails.

There is something remarkably good-natured and easy going about the tunes on "In the Electric Mist", though. I'm not quite sure what it is, but certainly the variation from gentle acoustic numbers to laid-back, almost grungy tones is a contributing factor. Sort of a late-night-in-the-city mood, if you know what I mean.

Dan Swano excels once again behind the desk, tinkles away at the piano on occasions and contributes to the backing vocal duties, but the front seat this time around is taken by new recruit Per Kjol. Gunder Dragsten (guitarist and mastermind) has at last found himself a full band (the line-up being completed by Tom Wahl, Henrik Peterson of Carpathian Fullmoon fame and Tommy Halseth), and this will no doubt help push Godsend to the top of the plod-metal pile.

A superb sophomore CD and one that doom fans and metalheads alike will love. I, personally, could do without the '70s parts, though...



MINDRIOT (Fin) - "Peak" CD '95 (Godhead)

When this one first arrived here at Number 49 I turned it on, sat back, hated every minute of tracks one through five and turned it off again. A few months later, i.e. one or two hours before I started to write this, I dug the thing out for review and pressed the play button, grimacing in anticipation. To my utmost surprise, I found myself coping with, nay, *enjoying* it. Worrying, to say the least, for someone who put out a furrow-browed first issue like the one I did little over a year ago.

Firmly committed to the now standard Finnish "fuck-you-we'll-do-what-we-want-thank-you-very-much" ethos, Mindriot have attempted to reach new plains of originality by merging fuck-knows-how-many styles and have, I would say, succeeded. For original the record most certainly is; interesting too, and that is definitely one of its main strengths.

Influences range from Entombed to Frank Zappa, according to Godhead's press release, and I'd be hard pressed to disagree with any of the other bands mentioned (Sonic Youth, NIN, etc.). Mindriot are very much their own people, though, and none of these inspirations are blatantly obvious. The moods vary from dreamy melancholia to anger and anguish, with a heavy shot of weirdness thrown into the mix for good measure. Particularly impressive is the vocal performance of Tuomu Saikkonen, who alternates between clean, growled and downright bizarre little outbursts with the greatest of ease. Oh, and there's some divine female crooning in there too.

Technical, ambiguous and psychedelic, it's all very clever, but I doubt many people will be able to actually appreciate the record. I also doubt whether I'd have bought it...

MOLESTED (Nor) - "Stormvold" MCD '95 (Effigy)

Okay, it's going to have to be mentioned at some point in this review so it may as well be right here at the start: Incantation. There. Now that's out of the way, let us take a look at the record at hand...

"Stormvold" is the follow-up to "Blod-Draum", Molested's debut album released earlier this year. It's pretty much a continuation of what was going on there but this time round everything comes across slightly more convincing. Raver too, but that's no bad thing - this is how death metal *should* sound. And yes, you did read correctly: Molested play death metal. I know they're from Norway, dear death metal purist, but that doesn't necessarily mean they suck. They are quite probably idiots in real life, I'll give you that, but you shouldn't disregard their music on the basis of nationality. In fact, that would be a big mistake because it really is quite good.

Over the five tracks (one of which is taken from the above-mentioned debut) the ever-so-slightly batty Norsemen display some of the most vicious, brutal and - like I said - raw death metal I've heard in quite some time. Incantation and early (i.e. "Soulside"-era) Darkthrone are good reference points, but there is a fair amount of individuality about 'em that appeals to me no end. Warped riffs jostle for space between blast beat after blast beat, and there is a deliciously violent vibe throughout. If only more bands could pick up on this...

One for fans of true death metal only, as others will no doubt be put off by the lack of overpolished production a la Morrisound or Colin Richardson. Me, I love it.

MARDUK (Swe) - "Opus Nocturne" CD '95 (Osmose)

This, in my opinion, was one of the finest black metal albums released in '95. It simply never ceases to thrill me with its barrage of high speed blackness. The emphasis here is on speed... Sure, Marduk's last offering "Those of the Unlight" was fast, but on "Opus Nocturne" fast is too lame a word to use!

Over the 40 or so minutes this CD lasts you will be dragged into a whirlwind of ferocious drumming, catchy riffs and tortured demonic vocals from Jocke Grave, who sounds like he is vomiting up a mixture of ground glass and hydrochloric acid when he sings! He puts so many of these so-called evil vocalists to shame. To be honest, it's not easy picking out any tracks that stand out, as they are all superb in their own way, but "Sulphur Souls" and "Materialized in Stone" have riffs that'll be going around in your head for ages.

With a top-notch production and excellent packaging, this is another great release from Osmose and indeed another great release from Marduk. Essential listening...

(Martin Kelso)

END OF GREEN (Ger) - "Infinity" CD '96 (Nuclear Blast)

Depressed subcore, eh? Now that's a new one. Not particularly indicative of what End of Green are all about, though. Repressed subcore would be a more apt description, methinks, as the German foursome is little more than a second rate Pyogenesis, who in turn were a second rate Paradise Lost until recently. Interesting.

Quite what Nuclear Blast aim to achieve by plaguing us with records like "Infinity" is completely beyond me. I can only assume there is a huge market for this sort of thing in Germany. Either that or they're trying (and failing spectacularly) to capitalise on the new wave of mood-metal spawned by Century Media's Tiamat legacy. Whatever, it's not for me, and I very much doubt that anyone reading this will

be even remotely interested in hearing 45 minutes' worth of moaning and droning alternative goth/doomrock that is sub-par even by the Nukes' standards. Oh, and let's not forget those obligatory German pronunciations...

If you're looking for lessons in melancholy I'd advise you to investigate Beyond Dawn's debut or something by The 3rd & the Mortal. Next!

MORTIFICATION (Aus) - "Primitive Rhythm Machine" CD '95 (Nuclear Blast)

It is worrying, to say the least, that crap like this has been able to infiltrate the metal scene with such ease, let alone be picked up by normally reliable record labels like Nuclear Blast. With the release of their sixth album in as many years Mortification are doubtless the leaders of the paradoxical sub-genre that calls itself white metal. Steve Rowe, frontman and mastermind aims to preach a message of "faith, hope and making something out of your life", and I think that with "preach" we have a key word here.

I very much doubt that the primary motivation behind this band has anything at all to do with love of music. As with every Christian act, Mortification willingly use metal as a vehicle for their little sermons in a hapless attempt to appeal to lost youth of today. It would be only logical to assume, then, that the songs themselves are of little consequence other than to provide a suitable backing to the lyrical scriptures, and this is painfully obvious as "Primitive Rhythm Machine" trundles past the casual-but-not-altogether-unbiased listener. No frills pseudo-trash straight from the waste paper baskets of Pantera and Sepultura with all the drive and diversity of a ageing fundamentalist.

An ideal gift for the spiritually enlightened, the retarded or the just-plain-stupid.

CATHEDRAL (UK) - "The Carnival Bizarre" CD '95 (Earache)

Dear Lee,

"Are you high? Are you HIGH?!", you scream in your best acid party voice over the opening bars of "Vampire Sun", track number one on Cathedral album number three. No, I'm afraid not but I wish I was. Being high is certainly more fun than being bored, and that is exactly how I feel when I listen to your music nowadays. Not to mention disappointed.

I was willing to forgive and forget when "The Ethereal Mirror", your allegedly rushed, record company fuelled sophomore outing was released. "Static Magick" I passed off as a minor glitch with a nervous giggle, but now... Now I've had enough. I've realised that your almighty "Forest of Equilibrium" was a one-off masterpiece and I can handle that. After all, how many bands have been able to release a constant flow of devastating records, not once falling even slightly short? Not many, as I'm sure you will agree.

Naturally, the ever-growing thicket (that's the plural of doomhead, incidentally) that is your loyal fan-base will no doubt greet this half-baked medley of stolen Sabbath riffs with the expected enthusiasm - a pot-clouded "Yeah, that's groovy, man" - but please do not ask me to "get down" again. I wouldn't wish "The Carnival Bizarre" on anyone.

Nice cover, though.

ESOTERIC (UK) - "Epistemological Despondency" DCD '94 (Aesthetic Death)

What begins as a feeling of unease, of something not being quite right, progresses through steadily mounting shades of fear and climaxes in full-blown terror. Such is the music of Esoteric.

"Epistemological Despondency" is not a nice record; you don't come in from a hard day at the office or school or wherever, slip into something more comfortable, lower the lights and throw it on for a quick pick-me-up. Nor is it background music - Esoteric have the tendency to creep into your subconscious and start destroying it.

What they play is profoundly difficult to describe to the uninitiated, really. Deep, dark and depressive in the extreme, their creation is a black and malignant one. Feedback-laden Satanic sludgecore would be one way of putting it; Abruptum meets Winter would be another. Sort of.

Over the ninety-plus minutes of unpleasantness there is no letup other than the disc-change half way through. Greg's tortured and heavily reverberated vocal expulsions bombard the listener with suicidal nihilism, his lyrics reflecting spiteful and deeply antisocial hate-philosophies. The multi-layered guitars churn and grind and generally cause headaches as I am sure they are intended to.

You will not find yourself enjoying these CDs particularly, but you *will* be affected by them. It is up to you whether or not to immerse yourself in the thick, suffocating blackness that is "Epistemological Despondency", but don't say you haven't been warned...

DARKSEED (Ger) - "Romantic Tales pt.II" advance MCD '95 (Invasion)

More mood-metal from Germany, but this lot are far better than End of Green. Well, not far better. Better, at least.

Unless I'm very much mistaken, Darkseed sucked quite badly when they first formed in 1992. Certainly, they can't

have been all that great because I remember hearing them a while back but cannot remember liking them. This, their second CD, I do like however. On paper it sounds pretty dire (melancholic German doomrock) but it somehow strikes a chord with me. Ask ye not why for I do not know exactly. Perhaps it has something to do with the general laid-back vibe - it's moody but not too deep; easy listening for the depressed, if you like.

There are some nice guitar harmonies to be heard too, not to mention a veritable army of pleasing little melodies. I was reminded of - you guessed it - fairly recent Pyogenesis and Paradise Lost, but there are some baroque elements in there as well which lend the tunes an air of refreshing semi-originality.

Criticisms - do I have any? Why of course, dear friends! Let's see... Ah yes, those vocals. Let's face it - German singers will never shed that accent; it's, like, a fact of life. Still, if you can handle P-O-G you can handle Darkseed. What else is there to moan about, then? Not a lot, to be honest, apart from the relative weakness of the guitar sound perhaps. Check out the thing for yourself and make up your own mind. \$12 should be enough, and you'll find the label address elsewhere.

MISANTHROPE (Fra) - "1666... Theatre Bizarre" CD '95 (Holy)

Oh fuck, here we go... I just *knew* that Misanthrope would suck and that is precisely why I had avoided them until the day Holy Records posted me their third CD. My suspicions had not been unfounded, as I discovered upon hitting 'play' (an operation of which I am becoming increasingly wary).

According to their bio sheet, "Misanthrope is acclaimed by the worldwide metal scene as one of the best French bands ever". If you are not already in fits of laughter there must be something wrong with you. Or you're French, which is more or less the same thing really. No, sorry. Xenophobia like that is uncalled for (funny, but). Honestly, though, if this is the best around I am only too glad that I've never bothered sampling too much of the competition.

Pretentious, frivolous and cretinous, "1666... Theatre Bizarre" is as awkward and incoherent as it is drawn-out and boring. Whispered - ahem - "poems" in English, French and German are combined with Tiamat-groans and effeminate moans in what can only be described as lovey-darling theatrics put to what I am almost ashamed to call metal.

To tell you the truth, I really cannot imagine *anyone* enjoying this at all other than the band themselves. Exactly the kind of crap that just worsens the already horrific reputation of French metal.

ACRIMONY (UK) - "Hymns to the Stone" CD '94 (Godhead)

For a band widely hailed as one of Britain's brightest new metal hopes, Acrimony are surprisingly lame. Three minutes into the opening number "Leaves of Mellow Grace" my off-button finger was already twitching, but I contained my distaste and allowed the five Welshmen to carry on. And carry on they did, dragging every Sabbath riff under the sun through the dirt. There aren't many, so repetition *ad nauseam* must have seemed the logical solution.

No, wait. Maybe I'm being a little harsh. Maybe I'm letting my natural aversion to flared trousers and in-your-face pot deification cloud my judgement. Maybe Acrimony are a great band, merely paying tribute to the music of others by playing it. Maybe songs like "Magical Mystic Man" and "Spaced Cat #6" really do interest me and are not, in fact, cliché-ridden hippie waffle. And hey, maybe pigs can fly after all!

Sorry if I'm offending anyone here (well... no I'm not really), but this CD has probably gotten into he hands of the wrong reviewer. It's just that Acrimony are one of many UK acts to have suspiciously made the "progression" from somewhat deathlier roots to the allegedly "more meaningful" Sounds of the Seventies in recent years. Fans of post-"Forest..." Cathedral and Sleep might want to lend "Hymns to the Stone" an ear, but everyone else should avoid it.

VED BUENS ENDE (Nor) - "Written in Waters" CD '95 (Misanthropy)

Release number six and, I should think, flop number one for Diamanda and Misanthropy. Why? Well, Ved Buens Ende is not the easiest of bands to listen to, for starters.

Frightfully artistic they may be, but good song writers? Debatable. The press release lists as one of the selling points, and I quote, "An extraordinarily supreme quality of musicianship, such as extremely complex drum-work and obsessing bass lines, which is very unusual for this genre." That's all very impressive, but technical ability isn't everything in heavy metal. In fact, if the songs aren't there it isn't anything. Just look at old Frost, Slayer or Bathory. Could they play their instruments? I think not, but it was the sheer ballsiness and brutality of their material that made it so brilliant. Brutality is not a word I would readily associate with "Written in Waters"; neither is brilliant, and the only ballsiness I can see in Ved Buens Ende is their belief that they will be able to get away with what they are doing for much longer.

Don't get me wrong here. I mean, there is far, far worse on the market at the moment, and the record does have its

moments. Most of these, however, are from their 1994 cassette LP on Ancient Lore. As a whole, the newer material is just too abstract for its own good.

Vicotnik's melodic guitar flourishes play off the wandering bass lines of Skoll, achieving little. Carl Michael's frantic drum work and "laments", as he puts it, just annoy. Nope, I'm sorry, but if it is post-black metal progressiveness you seek, you'd be far better off with Arcturus, Ulver, Fleurety or indeed the VBE/Old Man's Child split CD (feat. the cassette LP tracks plus one) on Ancient Lore Creations. For more info on the latter, write to the label.

IN FLAMES (Swe) - "Subterranean" MCD '95 (Wrong Again)

Ah, the gods of Swedish metal return and how they've progressed! If you thought 1994's "Lunar Strain" was something special (which it was) you will be positively thunderstruck when you hear "Subterranean" (which I was).

The tools of dødsmetal bands from yesteryear were blunt, heavy and devastating whereas nowadays those their descendants favour are sharp, precise and even more devastating. Crisp, cold and metallic, In Flames cut chillingly to the bone and deliver song after song of raging, burning, melodious mayhem.

The folk influences that were present on their debut CD have become a little less obvious but no less effective.

Instead, the ever-changing foursome have really pushed the heavy metal thing to the front of the stage, and I love it. At times the dual guitars of Messrs. Stromblad and Ljungström blaze with Maiden and Manowar-fuelled intensity, at others Metallica and their mid-eighties German plagiarists spring to mind. Everything has been melted down and remoulded the In Flames way, though, and comparisons to At the Gates and Dark Tranquillity are no longer viable.

If the March promo tape I've heard is anything to go by (the mini-CD sessions were in late '94) Jesper, Johan & Co. are just around the corner from complete brilliance, and it is with sweaty palms that I await album number two. "Subterranean", however, still ranks among the best Swedish records of 1995 and you'd be crazy to miss it.

REGREDIOR (Lit) - "Forbidden Tears" MCD '94 (Shiver)

Five reasonably well played tracks of morbid, technical and melodic death metal from the Lithuanian foursome Regredior. The production is fine, the packaging so-so and the band dead. I think if I wrote any more about this release it would be pointless, drawn-out and boring, so I won't. If you like underground death metal and enjoy listening to no-longer-existent bands that had about as much to say as this review (maybe there's a connection somewhere) feel free to check "Forbidden Tears" out. If you don't - fine, don't. Sorry Hans (that's Shiver Hans, by the way - I wouldn't apologise to Hans Piles for anything).

HYPOCRISY (Swe) - "Abducted" CD '96 (Nuclear Blast)

It took Hypocrisy a long time to realise that their immense "Pleasure of Molestation" mini-CD could not be bettered, and when they finally did the results were less than encouraging (I'm talking about the godawful "Fourth Dimension" CD here, in all its long-winded and over-produced glory). Fortunately for all, the progression they've made since is truly astonishing.

"Abducted" is close-encounters-metal of the third kind in that it deals with various X-Files related lyrical topics and is about as alien to the band's previous material as you can get. Sure, it's still Hypocrisy - numerous distinctly hypocritical riffs testify to that - but at the same time Pete Tagtgren and his merry men sound more akin to recent Carcass and At the Gates, with their razor-sharp precision riffs and generous helpings of melody, not to mention the harsh snarls that have



all but taken over from the characteristic phlegm gargles of yesteryear.

Moods and tempos vary considerably over the thirteen tracks of science non-fiction music, much to the band's advantage, and the songs themselves are far more memorable. Effective synth work fills the gaping holes left on album number three, and the Abyss Studio (Pete's own little hellhole of a recording place) production lends everything a refreshing and much needed crunch.

Yeah, it's different all right, but I doubt that hardcore Hypocrites will be alienated altogether by the giant leap forward. Even if some find it too commercial or classy, more fans will be gained than lost, and I think it's about time to forgive and forget.

VARIOUS - "WAR Compilation Volume 1" CD '95 (Wrong Again)

Thirteen tracks of pure and undiluted melody and venom, courtesy of Europe's most promising young label Wrong Again. For the uninitiated a perfect introduction to the thriving new Swedish metal scene, and even those already familiar with the spawn of studios Fredman and Unisound will be pleasantly surprised by the amount of new and unreleased material featured.

In Flames get the ball rolling with a track from their "Subterranean" mini-CD and display a notable progression from their 1994 debut. Next up are my one-time favourites Eucharist, whose surprising and exclusive appearance marks the end of their short but sweet career as recording artists. "Wounded and Alone" and "The Predictable End", as the pieces are called, prove to be an ample closing chapter and are production-wise superior to the in my mind disappointing "A Velvet Creation" LP, Wrong Again's virgin release. Dark Tranquillity follow with what is perhaps the strongest track on the album - a raging little number entitled "Punish My Heaven" from the same recording session as their "Of Chaos and Eternal Night" mini-CD. Technically busy as usual yet packing more of a punch than their Spinefarm debut, the song acts as an encouraging preview of album number two, "The Gallery". Dissection's appearance will no doubt be a lucrative one for the label but is really a fans-only affair, the atypical "Where Dead Angels Lie" and a cover of Tommentor's "Elizabeth Bathory" sounding nowhere near as convincing as their second full-length. The eternally dull Misanthrope prove not to be a hard act to follow, and Ceremonial Oath's two

exclusives capitalise richly, pummeling the listener with Maiden-esque intensity and a venom only Swedes are capable of. Mourning Sign, whose album I like a lot, somehow failed to impress me with an early version of a track therefrom ("En to Pan"), but this minor disappointment was more than compensated for by the ever-godly Katatonia. Two tracks with a combined length of sixteen minutes... YES!!! Purgatorium bring things to a close, but I couldn't help but feel sorry for Tomas Lindberg's wee brother and his fellow men of metal, as with competition like the above their track was more of an anticlimax than anything else. Better luck next time, I suppose...

All in all, an essential piece of plastic. It would be nice if every compilation around was as useful/enjoyable as Wrong Again's first, but it ain't a perfect world. Miss this at your peril!

IMMORTAL (Nor) - "Battles in the North" CD '95 (Osmose)

The kings from the north return with their third holocaust of frostbitten black metal, and what a spectacular return it is! I was curious as to how Immortal would progress from "Pure Holocaust", as it seemed to be as fast as it could get, but somehow they have managed to produce something even more intense.

Osmose have called this "the most frostbitten album up to date" in recent advertisements, and I don't doubt that one bit, as "Battles in the North" is

truly the coldest album I've heard. From beginning to end, it blasts out from the speakers like an ice-cold wind, leaving you shivering but always wanting more. Everything here happens at a raging pace, full of power and barbaric intensity, but that doesn't mean it gets boring. In fact, it's quite the opposite, as the sheer ferocity of this makes it quite a fascinating listen... and it really does tend to get the adrenaline flowing!

Highlights are surely the blistering title track (which fucking blew me away the first time I heard it!), the moody "Cursed Realms of the Winterdemons" and the closing track "Blasphemous (Might Ravendark)", which although is not quite as fast as the other tracks, still has that unique Immortal feel to it, showing that they still have class even when they are not playing at the usual chaotic pace.

In a sense, Immortal now rule a kingdom all of their own. I mean, no band could even remotely achieve what they have come up with here. This is supreme grinding black metal at its absolute limits. It will surely be interesting to see where Abbath and Demonaz go from here 'cause it surely can't get any faster than this, can it?

(Martin Kelso)

VARIOUS - "Sometimes Death is Better Volume 1" CD '93 (Shiver)

I don't even know why I'm reviewing this - volumes two, three and four have already (ahem) graced us with their presence, and the material featured here is so out of date that I've been cultivating mould on it for a few months now. Oh, wait a minute. I remember - Hans sent it to me for review, and that's as good a reason as any, I guess...

Basically, what we have here is a collection of mediocre underground death metal bands (15, to be precise), none of which impressed me in the slightest. This is surprising, considering that Inquisitor, Deranged, Inverted and Disgusting are among them. However, such is the outdatedness of their featured tracks that it really doesn't matter what those names mean nowadays. It's 1996 ferchrissake, and I need death metal demo tracks from three years ago like a fish needs a bicycle. Also, the packaging is atrocious (typewritten inlays, to buggery!) and the sound quality almost worse. Compilations like this, to be blunt, have always been useless. Sorry. Again.

Nope, I don't have anything nice to say about Shiver 007CD at all so I won't say any more. \$18 is, I believe, the asking price, but I wouldn't waste your money. See elsewhere for the Shiver address.

ARCTURUS (Nor) - "Aspera Hiems Symfonia" CD '96 (Ancient Lore Creations)

Ah, those Norwegian demigods of the avant-garde return for what is perhaps the last time. Ironic though it is, see, the outfit looks to disband shortly in the light of their writing speed (or lack thereof), but what a way to go!

Continuing in the vein of their strictly limited and highly acclaimed "Constellation" mini-CD, Arcturus have created what is perhaps one of the most enigmatic Norwegian records I have ever had the pleasure of aurally caressing. Symphonic in the extreme, melodic and atmospheric, "Aspera Hiems Symfonia" is the soundtrack to your wildest and darkest dreams. Combining the unearthliness or their previous material with a crisp, confident and infinitely refreshing tone, Gamm, Svered et al have - it appears - completely rewritten the Norse musical score.

Reflecting elements of each of the involved's main bands in a mirror of ivory and silver, Arcturus seduce the listener with heartfelt passages of mystery and woe, only to shatter them minutes later with all the harshness of a winter snowstorm. Thundering, bombastic and threatening, they engulf and embrace and generally infatuate you with their brilliance.

Pretension and waffle aside, this is one helluva debut album. 'Twould do the metal scene the world of good to take a leaf out of Arcturus' book and strive for similar levels of intelligence and innovation as opposed to rehashing and subsequently making a hash of the work of others. You don't have to buy "Aspera Hiems Symfonia", but then you don't have to breathe either, necessarily...

AGONIA (Ita) - "Servants of Technological Addiction" advance MCD '95

Yeah, well. Brutal death metal - you either love it or hate it. Me, I'm sort of indifferent to it at the moment, but then surely that's my problem, right? Right, but it's also yours because this review is going to be a fairly tricky one to write. Oh well, objectivity is a handy tool when confronted with all things nondescript so here goes...

'Kay, this Agonia's third official studio recording, the other two being a mediocre demo and a fairly promising seven inch on Cryptic Soul. One half of the mini-CD comprises of rerecorded versions of the two tracks from said vinyl debut and the other features two brand-spanking-new numbers. Influentially speaking, it's pretty much your standard brutal death metal affair, i.e. Cannibal Corpse and Suffocation. However, I was reminded more of the subgenre's second generation, in particular "Sermon..." era Pyrexia and Internal Bleeding, which I guess is pretty cool if you like that sort of thing. Me being me, I find the mini-CD competently executed but nothing to write home about. The age-old originality problem strikes again, y'know? Still for a Southern European band Agonia are a cut above the competition and almost certainly on par with the majority of their Stateside counterparts.

The thing was originally intended for a Wild Rags release, but nothing ever came of it as far as I am informed. Write for more info to vocalist and spokesperson Carlo Gervasi at CP 151, 25038 Rovato, Brescia, Italy.

DISSECTION (Swe) - "Storm of the Light's Bane" CD '95 (Nuclear Blast)

Immense, malign and powerful, Dissection return with what is by all accounts one of the greatest Swedish metal albums since... well, since their 1993 debut "The Somerlain".

I have to admit, I was a little sceptical to begin with. Major label pick-ups have not always spelled success for underground greats, at least where musical quality and coherence is concerned. Also, the quartet's 1994 demo tracks (later featured on Wrong Again Record's compilation CD) had left me a little cold, especially the somewhat un-Dissection-like "Where Dead Angels Lie". It is ironic, then, that the song has since grown on me considerably and in fact become one of record number two's highlights. Apart from this mid-paced metallic tribute to Norse folk music, it's pretty much business as usual throughout "Storm of the Light's Bane". And why not? Business as usual at Dissection Ltd., you see, means some of the most vicious, melodic and chilling death metal around.

Okay, okay, so there are hints of black metal here and there, Mayhem being the primary influence, I imagine. For the most part, though, it is untamed brutality through an through. The songs are faster and more exciting than those on the debut, and there is an overwhelming sense of urgency throughout. To tell you the truth, "The Somerlain" actually sounds pretty meagre in comparison. Certainly back-to-back listens only highlight the progression made, but surely that can only be a good thing. I shudder to think what future recordings will bring...

The production is marvellous (thanks to Dan Swano and an all-new Unisound), the packaging - much like the musicianship - flawless and the songs themselves storming. Still, there are a few gripes: as a tape trader I had already heard half of the six real songs (the other two being an intro and outro), "Night's Blood", "Where Dead Angels Lie" and "Retribution" all having appeared on various 1994 demo recordings. My own impatient fault, I guess, but some people may feel a little let down.

To end this review on a positive note, however, I must once again stress that "Storm of the Light's Bane" is one of the most mercilessly and monumentally extreme releases to have been unleashed on the death and black metal scene for quite some time. Album of the year 1995, I would say.

GEHENNA (Nor) - "2nd Spell - Through the Veils of Darkness" CD '95 (Cacophonous)

My oh my! Nihil, the sinister magician and all round fat guy, has been very busy of late. Cacophonous Records have released debut albums by Gehenna, Primordial and the 'not quite as eagerly awaited as it would have been if "Scorn Defeat" wasn't so bad that it hurt' sophomore release by Japan's Sigh.

Anyway, Gehenna is, quite effortlessly in fact, the best of the bunch, so I might as well start with the good news...

Gehenna aren't very original - this is something we need to establish straightaway - but, all things considered, they aren't all that bad. In fact, listening to this album brought back memories of Emperor's debut mini-album an Candlelight. I'm not saying that Gehenna are a carbon copy of Emperor (fuck it, yes I am), but their tendency to soak everything in keyboards and opt for the old black metal chestnut of hissy, messy production can't help but cause people to draw comparisons between the two bands. However, I'll stick my neck out and say that Gehenna are the better of the two, simply because "Through the Veils..." is a far more melodic album than "In the Nightside Eclipse".

Anyway, if you are a fan of typical black metal (which Metal Hammer seems to think everyone is at the moment), then at the very least you should try and swipe a copy of this album from Vinyl Solution or HMV or wherever. (Hans Stiles)

PRIMORDIAL (Ire) - "Imrama" CD '95 (Cacophonous)

Hmm, I'm not a huge fan of this album. Primordial have never really impressed me, but I thought that they'd at least use the opportunity of recording an album to try and develop a few of their ideas. Instead, we get a bunch of songs (including the obligatory few demo tracks from their debut demo) that, apart from a few new vocal ideas, differ in no way from the path trodden by the band and countless other bands years before.

Primordial are lucky in some respects: they're still a relatively young band and they can play reasonably well, so there's room for improvement. What's more, Alan is quite a good singer, albeit one with a serious goth fixation. To the band's credit, they have steered away from typical clichéd black metal imagery.

However, it has to be said that "Imrama" isn't a particularly good album. In fact, I would go as far as to say that this album should never have been released, as overall it just isn't of a high enough standard. Maybe album number two will be better. (Hans Stiles)

SIGH (Jap) - "Infidel Art" CD '95 (Cacophonous)

Oh well! We go from a band with promise to a band that needs experience to a band that needs to be gently put to sleep in the most humane manner possible. Sigh are just fucking hopeless, I'm afraid.

Actually, fair's fair. To give the band credit, at least this is an improvement on "Scorn Defeat" and the band have got a little better. However, listening to "Infidel Art" caused me to ponder the question *is it worth giving a band credit for simply being better than shit?*, and I think the answer has to be no.

As for the music... the music! Well, Sigh's music still sounds like it was written in 1985 (Saxon and Helloween fans take note) (okay - Ed) by Venom or Destruction, with an early eighties' dodgy production to boot. The playing is unimaginative, basic and, in general, pretty piss-poor - probably because Sigh, the self-proclaimed "Black Metal Yakuza" have chopped off the odd digit as a sign of humility - and some of the solos could peel paint. In fact, the only part of the music that shows any promise are the liberally scattered keyboard breaks that remind the listener that we're in the nineties and that dodgy black metal must be saturated by synths.

Sigh look like they should be a good black metal band. Christ, they've got centre partings and a half! But the fact remains, I'd feel fucking stupid if I forked out a tenner for this pile of crap. (Hans Stiles)

BURZUM (Nor) - "Filosofem" CD '96 (Misanthropy)

Ahh, the final review of this issue... About fucking time, is all I can say!

As you all should know by now, "Filosofem" is Varg Vikernes' final Burzumic opus. Recorded sometime in the first half of 1993 (before the shit hit the proverbial, in other words), the record contains some 65 minutes of harsh, barbaric yet strangely beautiful Norwegian Volksmetall.

Side A of the advance tape is the most interesting for me, as its roots are planted firmly in traditional Grishnackhtian soil. Not only that, the songs themselves ("Dunkelheit", "Jesus' Tod", "Erblicket die Tochter des Firmaments" and

"Gebrechlichkeit ii.") are by far the strongest Burzum material to date. The two remaining tracks ("Rundgang um die transzendente Saule der Singularität" and "Gebrechlichkeit ii.") are in the mellower, more Tangerine Dream-like vein of "Tomhet", for example, and therefore dull, dull, dull.

Presentation-wise, the package is Misanthropy's most accomplished yet. Each format includes a marvellously illustrated A5 booklet which contains the lyrics and a synopsis of the inspirations behind them (in German and Norwegian, mind) that only enhances the listening experience, really.

Honestly, I know it may seem strange for me to be showering someone whose actions and attitudes are somewhat removed from my own way of thinking with praise, but I think Burzum's music speaks for itself. Whether you are a sceptic, a fan or altogether impartial, I think you will find it difficult not to be impressed. A supreme closing chapter by all accounts...

label addresses

Aesthetic Death, Silwood, Pershore Road, Eckington, Worcs WR10 3AP, England.

Ancient Lore Creations, Markalleen 39, 1320 Stabekk, Norway.

Cacophonous Records, 231 Portobello Road, London W11 1LT, England.

Candlelight Records, PO Box 328, High Wycombe, Bucks HP15 6TY, England.

Century Media Records, Balkenstr. 17-19, 44137 Dortmund, Germany.

Earache Records, Suite 1-3 Westminster Buildings, Theatre Square, Nottingham NG1 6LG, England.

Effigy Records, PB 2108 Grunerlokka, N-0505 Oslo, Norway.

Full Moon Productions, 948 Callahan Court, Lakeland, FL 33801, USA.

Godhead Records, Via R. Ruggiero 16/d, 80125 Napoli, Italy.

Heathendom Music, att. P. Karlsson, Fasadvagen 11, 69272 Kumla, Sweden.

Holy Records, 4 BD Gutenberg, 93190 Livry-Gargan, France.

Invasion Records, PO Box 2119, 15707 Konigs Wusterhausen, Germany.

Metal Blade Records, Suite 50, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 86, 1012 SE Amsterdam, Holland.

Misanthropy Records, PO Box 9, Hadleigh, Suffolk IP7 5AU, England.

Nuclear Blast Records, Hauptstr. 109, 73072 Donzdorf, Germany.

Osmose Productions, BP 57, 62990 Beaurainville, France.

Progress Records, Vindegade 101, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark.

Relapse Records, PO Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551, USA.

Shiver Records, Bossepleinstraat 6, 3128 Baal, Belgium.

Unisound International, PO Box 66084, 15510 Athens, Greece.

Unholy blasphemies, Batman... These guys are fukken evil!!!

And here are the rest of Ross' interviews. Like I said in the editorial, you don't have to read them if you don't want to, and quite frankly I wouldn't blame you. Some of them are as old as they are imbecilic (see Throne of Acad, Graveland, Gorgoroth and Funeral Winds, to name but four), and half of the addresses are no doubt way out of date. However, they're here if you want them...

Moonspell

When was Moonspell formed and why? Do you think you have jumped on the black metal trend? For how long have you been listening to black metal?

"Moonspell was born from the ashes of Morbid God, a creation of Tetragrammaton in 1989 era vulgaris. The primitive intent of this gathering is still being law actually. That was to create evil atmospheric music that would really honour and dignify our beliefs and philosophy and fulfil the need of creation shared by all elements. Moonspell emerged as a natural maturing of our thoughts and will and adds to the primitive goal the sphere of having to do inaugural and genuine original music to detach ourselves from the thousand sad abortions a misconception of the black metal essence led to. I'd also like to state that we've not jumped in any black metal trend because when it was originated we were already born and chose what we'll be playing future. Anyway, this means little to me because I urge not to be judged by chronological events but yes for essential, feeling proscriptions. Personally I listen to metal music since I was 13 years old and at that time I listened to Venom, Bathory, Onslaught, Possessed, Celtic Frost, Hellhammer but also to Iron Maiden, Metallica, Exodus, Kreator, Whitesnake, Candlemass, etc. There was not a distinction. All was pure and aggressive heavy music! And I was into it! I can be honest and say that from all these bands Bathory for several reasons, which are already mentioned nowadays, inspired me the most. Very much also Venom and Celtic Frost, the forefathers of black metal. Yet this does not make me more true than people who listen with the same feeling as I do but for many reasons woke up to this particular music. This is a stupid discussion and very tiring because everyone is true but the others are false! I do not care about it at all. I listen to metal music with as much pleasure as I listen to atmospheric, religious, classical, avant-garde music. I am much more a Gothic individual (not the '90s conception) than a metal individual. So my law is above all I am and not I must be this or that so people like me and buy my stuff. I think music has its very own language and a way of touching people so personally I stay away from this harmless and childish polemical. There are more vital things and one it's the reason of all: music. Let's not forget that!!!"

Do you think you are an original band? Which bands have influenced you? Are you into old bands more than the new ones?

"Yes, I think Moonspell has an own identity in performing music and writing litanyes. Not a common band. If it was then there wouldn't be a reason to go on. We have influences that range from Bathory, Rotor, Dead Can Dance, from classical composers to ethnic music. As I said above, I like a lot of the old bands. New bands I like are Emperor, Arcturus, Taranis, Sinoath, Grand Belial's Key, etc. in what concerns the new breed of black metal."

Do you wear paint, bullet belts, etc.? What, if any, weapons do you have?

"I use a very particular and esoteric face-paint, mantles, Gothic shirts, etc. more than spikes, bullet belts, etc. I appreciate this image but my own image suits me better. I like

weapons, naturally! I do not possess any noble weapon but soon I'll order a noble Arabian sword!"

Are there any good bands in Portugal you can recommend?

"Yes. Fili Nigrantium Infernalium and Decayed."

Have you played any live shows and what are they like?

"We've just played one live show with Decayed so far. It was a very professional show where we created a theatrical act with indeed macabre and Gothic atmosphere! Truly esoteric because we put the audience under the moon spell!"

Are you into Satanism, paganism, occultism, etc.?

"I am a Satanist with private and erudite conceptions I could narrate and explain at the expense of having your 'zine just for me. So in brief Satanism is personally much more than the denial of God and the acceptance of another. It is a path of culture and philosophy and therefore a lifecode. It is also my energy and the science of our inner energy. Paganism is very primitive and if it could be said a Christian form of Satanism. Satanism in a Christian view as a sick and disgusting pseudo religion is bound for paganism. Paganism is therefore a vital part of man. It represents all icons Satanism uses like the goat, the moon, the wolf, their adoration is a pagan birth attitude. Paganism and Satanism are not in collision. They act together in this specific way. I could tell you more about it once again. Occultism is an established and profound science which has the occult and the (oc)cultures as methods and objects. It is a very wide branch and only the interest it creates matches its whole greatness. My lyrics are very particular and not only these subjects determine them. I take also philosophy, mythology, eroticism, devotion and woman as stances."

Do tourists cause many problems where you live?

"I do not know, neither do I care. A true culture is auto-preserved by its greatness and not even ten million Fuji armed Chinese can destroy it!"

Have you had any label interest yet and is there any label you would especially like to sign to?

"Yes, we'll edit a mini-CD through Adipocere Records containing three opus of inaugural, symphonic and ethnic Satanic music! Watch out for it in January/February. Interest? Well, some like Decapitated, Obscure Plasma, Shivardashana, Warmaster and many others. I'd like to sign with Avantgarde (ex-Obsecure Plasma) or Century Media, Black Mark, 4AD or Peaceville. Signing with Osmose would be poor!"

What do you think of the Norwegian black metal scene and the recent murder of Euronymous?

"I don't like to waste precious words with the Norwegian circus. I respect their attitude, it's a fact, but I never thought it would be so poor of content. It was purely auto promotion. Norwegian bands are great, maybe the best ones nowadays, yet the cancer of the scene was Grishnackh - a previous Old Funeral guitarist who distorted everything and everyone. The death of Euronymous was a great loss because Mayhem ceased to exist and if you listen to their advance LP you'll see how great the loss was. Norse individuals have the northern way, we Latins have the southern way. The true way is what we think ourselves to be true!"

Where do you think the movement will go in future?

"I have this dream, as any concerned people, of having back the purity and originality of the whole movement as in the beginning. Yet I read and see so much shit that it's perhaps the abyss which awaits it. And then those things with wings will fly from mediocrity and the others will return to their home and pit."

Last words?

"Thanks for the interesting interview and for the exposure in your 'zine. I salute you! People who desire to listen to us send

6 USD and get our demo. Watch out for our mini-CD. Remember: the key to joy is disobedience! Will and wisdom are the keys of the worlds! Ki iq kyl'd zhem'n!"

Moonspell c/o Langsuyar, PO Box 28, 2700 Brandoa, Portugal.

Dawnfall

To begin with, please tell us some details about your new demo "Dominance of Darkness". Where did you record it and how do you feel it differs from "Mysterical Darkness"?

"At first it won't be our next demo, it will be our first CD. It will be out in April I hope! It was recorded at Room 119, June 1993. The difference is the progression of half a year, more original, and the sound is also very strange and rough."

How was the response to your first demo?

"The response was good. We sold about 300 copies 'til now and it's limited to 500 copies as the CD will be."

Have you had any label interest so far?

"Yes, our CD will be out on Nazgul's Eyrie Productions. This is a label run by a friend of mine, Opyros."

Do you wear paint, etc.? What bands do you think have influenced your sound and to start playing black metal?

"On the photos of our first demo (and some other old ones) we wear corpsepaint to promote the demo feeling and the dark music. But nowadays it lost its meaning for us, every band do that. We are individualists! Well we start to play black metal because we want to create a world on its own, which shouldn't have anything to do with the "world" known in our everyday life. We put our dark emotions into music. I don't think that a band influenced us in a major way, but maybe some people see it different, I don't care. Some people say we are something between Hellhammer, Bathory and old Samael but it's a bit strange cuz Tork who writes the guitar stuff doesn't listen to black metal, only classical music and some others."

Do you listen to anything outside black metal?

"Yes of course. Stuff like Mussorgsky, Kronos Quartet, Laibach, Nephilim, GGFH, Dead Can Dance, Enya, Diamanda Galas, Tom Waits, Leonard Cohen, Cirith Ungol and others."

Is there a black metal organisation in Germany as there is in Norway? Have any churches been burnt down? Any bands you can recommend?

"Yes, there is a German black metal mafia and the only member is Leichenschrei (maybe also the Absurd member which is not in prison), ask him about it. I don't really know if there are burnt down churches here in Germany, I don't care about anti-Christians they are not worthy for that! I want to recommend: Martyrium, they have two demos out and their first CD will be out this year. They play very technical black metal. Then we have Ungod, the oldest still existing black metal band. They now have their first LP on Unsane's label. Next great band is Naked Whipper, they play some stuff in the vein of Blasphemy/old Behemoth. A really godly band, they have a 7" out I think and a demo."

What trend do you think will take the place of black metal?

"I don't know and don't care about what will take place of black metal trend in the near future."

Do you have many nazis in your area that cause trouble?

"No, we don't have much neo-nazis in our area, so they couldn't cause much trouble anyway."

What influences your lyrics?

"Well, Tork writes the lyrics, he is a literature fanatic, he reads many books, too many to mention."

Last words, future plans?

"Thanks for this interview. Our first demo is still available for 6 US dollars/10,- DM, our first CD will be out soon

hopefully. After the recording of our new stuff "3 Raume" we will split up. Commit suicide!"
Dawnfall c/o Nazgul's Eyrie Productions, PO Box 1122, 92656 Neustadt/WN, Germany.

Mordor

Since the release of "Csejthe" things appear to be very quiet for Mordor. Have you any new compositions?

"Well, after the release of "Csejthe" we made a little pause for promoting it and finally to find a licensing agreement with Wild Rags Records. That's why we don't release other things during the years '92-'93, even if a split 7" with Herb Mullin was foregone. But this project failed and Wild Rags didn't release it. Otherwise we have composed some new stuff which is more expanded, complex, but always in the dark vein. Different things must be released but we prefer waiting their coming before speaking about them."

Have you had any label interest?

"We received several interests from different labels apart from Wild Rags. But them and us cannot agree on the conditions; we need an important liberty for music or artwork. It is an essential point for Mordor, and I have to say that working with us is also not easy."

Please tell us a bit about The Way of Nihilism compilation tape which you appear on.

"The Way of Nihilism is essentially a concept about nothingness, the search of the absolute emptiness, the establishment that our modern civilisation is in fact a decay, especially since the progress of the technology. The Mordor song is called "In Search of the Pure Negation" and speaks about the way we follow; musically it is a little different to "Csejthe", perhaps more axed on guitars. All the other bands (Gora, Vorsaken, Art Sneider, Odessa, Cult of Noise) are projects released by our friends in collaboration with us, with the aim to make something very extreme, a musical view of nihilism."

How did you find it dealing with Wild rags? Many people have branded them a rip off label and stuff. Did you get all your money from them and is the tape still available from them?

"We wrote to Richard C. from Wild Rags, sending him our early demo "Odes"; he was interested in distributing exemplars and finally very convinced by "Csejthe". I know it exists rumours about Wild Rags, but we've had no problems with payments and all the K7s came back. Otherwise "Csejthe" and "Odes" are still available from the WR address."

Do you have any plans for a promo video? What concept would a Mordor video have?

"Not for the moment, perhaps in several years. In my opinion the most important thing is music; pictures must only help the atmospheres and not impose a precise vision. That's why we use pictures of ruins, desolate landscapes, etc. A utopian idea would be to release a film based on the history of the bloody century."

Seeing as you are from Switzerland, did you even get the chance to see Hellhammer live?

"We didn't effectively have the luck to appreciate Hellhammer's gigs but I have to say that I hate the new Celtic Frost. Now Thomas Gabriel Warrior disowns his past and, however, black and dark music is the future."

Have Mordor played any live shows?

"No, we don't play gigs for several reasons. We don't like usual concerts, we don't want to see musicians playing their music, we want to take a bath of darkness to drown our individuals in the gloomy music. That's why we'd like to propose something very different from the usual concert with slamming, diving, headbanging and other fucking shits. The second principal reason is the lack of material using our midi system live."

How do you feel about the scene in Switzerland these days?

"We are not in touch with many Swiss bands. I think it exists several groups influenced by Samael or the death metal trend. But there are also some people trying to be original like maybe Sadness or in the gothic scene Trom.Bloodstar is very interesting too."

What do you see the future bringing for both yourself and Mordor?

"Death... Death is awaiting our souls and knows that even if one day we have a little "success" with Mordor, in a thousand years nothing will remain. But we ourselves are waiting for death. Life in this part of reality is so absurd."

The end is near if there is anything else you wish to say...

"The end of this world is effectively near. We are in the last age of the cycle and our modern civilisation will soon completely disappear. Normal people think we are living in the greatest time of mankind, it is the era of discoveries. But in fact a devastation process has started; nothing in this world will be spared, nothing here will be like now. Let's leave these blind people to their illusions. If we are lucky we will see the end of this civilisation. Darkness will reign without partitions and maybe a cycle will begin."

Mordor c/o Gora, BP 360, 1020 Renesse Vdl, Switzerland.

Gorgoroth

Do you consider yourselves a "true" band?

"Yes, Gorgoroth is a true band. We are serious about what we do and we do not play because it's fun like most of the shit bands do nowadays."

How has the response been to "A Sorcery Written in Blood" and how many have you sold? What influenced the material on this demo?

"A Sorcery..." has sold very well. People seem to like it. Pain and misery..."

I see you use paint, bullet belts, clubs, etc. How important do you think these things are for a black metal band?

"I don't care how important it is for "BM" bands to use corpsepaint, etc. It's important for Gorgoroth, we've decided to use it. What other people think or believe isn't exactly the most important thing for us to think about."

Have you ever played live? Is it not just skateboard children who go to gigs in Norway?

"Gorgoroth have never played live. Maybe we will once in the future. About skateboard children in jogging suits, I hate them and I don't care what they do."

Are you friends with any other bands in Norway?

"We haven't any friends at all playing in bands in or out of Norway but of course we know some people around. Samoth of Emperor for instance is going to play bass with us in the studio next month. (Watch out for promo tape, etc. soon, lots of new material that kills the demo stuff.)"

What does Satanism mean to you?

"Something personal."

Have you had any label interest? What for you is the ultimate black metal label?

"Some label interest, yes, but nothing is signed yet. Maybe there will be a 7" on Hellish Empire (Fra)? DSP was the ultimate label."

What do you see happening for Gorgoroth in the future?

"Pain and misery."

Last words?

"Fuck off, send money for T-shirts, demos, etc. Support Gorgoroth, send bux, little girls, etc."

Gorgoroth c/o Infernus, Box 21, 6995 Hellevik, Norway.

Alastis

A brief history of Alastis...

"Alastis was founded by Masmiseim and myself in 1987; we took Masmiseim's brother Acronoise on drums and Zumof on vocals; together we recorded our first demo in 1989 and our second in 1990. Masmiseim left the band in April 1990 but helped us for the recording of our promo tape in 1991. In October 1991 Zumof left the band so I gave my voice to Alastis and in December we found, at last, a new bass player Eric. We recorded our album "The Just Law" in June 1992 for Head Not Found records but it was available only in March 1993. In June 1993 Eric left the band after some personal problems and was replaced by Rotten (ex-Misery). In the same time Gillioz joined the band on guitar/synthesizer and myself, War D. on guitar and vocals."

How are your relations with Head Not Found? How has the LP/CD sold and did you make much money from it?

"Between us an HNF it's more a friendship relation than a real deal between band and label. Until now I think we have sold about 1800 copies of "The Just Law" on LP and CD but I'm sure we have still not repaid all our expenses!"

When can we expect a second LP and on which label?

"We hope to record a second album in the beginning of '94. We are in contact with some labels, but I can't say more about this..."

On the flyer for your LP you are classed as brutal doom. Are you happy with this description? Perhaps black/doom...

"Yes, we know many people who think our style is more black metal than brutal doom, but as you know our music is very slow and for many other people black metal means speed, so black/doom???"

About what do your lyrics tell?

"About the path towards the truth!"

What bands have influenced Alastis?

"I think we are influenced by all the different styles we listen to. We aren't only into black/death metal; we are open-minded and listen to a lot of different bands between Pink Floyd and Ministry!"

Have Alastis played many gigs?

"We played only six gigs and the last one was in April '92 with our old line-up. With all our problems with the line-up it wasn't easy to think about that. Now we are ready again and our future shows will kill!"

Do you think there is room for development in your music? In what ways will you progress? Do you think black/death will be accepted on a wide scale one day?

"You will see with our second album, more powerful but so dark and evil... I don't think this music will become popular, it's too dark and people are afraid to seek the truth."

Are there any bands outside death/doom that you recommend?

"Outside death/doom? Type O Negative, Laibach, Fields of the Nephilim, Manowar, Pink Floyd, Dire Straits, Godflesh..."

Tell us of the future. Releases, etc.

"Future! I don't like to play with this word. I'm ready to die. Alastis is our life, it's our fight and we hope to record many other albums!"

Last words?

"Thanks for the interview, the underground needs 'zines like yours and I thank you in its name. Stay dark and evil, never forget the right path..."

Alastis, Rte Des Ateliers 16, 1963 Vetroz VS, Switzerland.

Pazuzu

When was Pazuzu formed and what beliefs does it have?

"Well, Pazuzu was formed on a dark fullmoon night in January '93 by me, namely The Evilized One, on guitar and The Conjurer on vocals. After two months we recruited two new members called The Ghost (lead guitar) and The Dark One (drums). We all worship the ancient gods."

Is "Conjurations" your first demo? How many copies have you sold and have people given you a good response?

"Yes, "Conjurations" is the first release of Pazuzu. We haven't sold that many copies so far because we released the demo just two months ago and because we didn't spread a lot of flyers. So we aren't very known in the scene yet, but the responses we did get were very positive except one."

Are there now a lot of black metal bands in Switzerland? I know of two great bands from your country (Alastis and Samael). How does it feel to come from the same country as the once great Hellhammer? Did you ever see them live?

"No, there are still only a few black metal bands in Switzerland compared to the amount of death metal bands around here. Actually, I don't know of any other black metal bands in the German part of Switzerland. Alastis, Samael and some other black metal bands are all from the French part of Switzerland, so we don't have any contact with them 'cos we speak a different language. Of course it's cool to be from the same country as Hellhammer and they are one of my fave bands, but no, unfortunately, I've never seen them live. Martin E. Ain (bassist in HH) told me once he wanted to reform HH and do some gigs but Tom G. Warrior was unfortunately not willing to do it... what a shame! Instead they just re-released "Apocalyptic Raids" on CD."

What do you think separates you from all the other black metal bands? Do you think you are original?

"Well, to tell the truth, we don't really care if we are the same as all the other black metal bands or not. We just do our own thing and it's the people who listen to our music who decide whether we are just a copy of any other band or not. It doesn't matter to us at all."

Have you played any live shows?

"We don't play live. We don't see any reason to play live in front of trendy death metal kids who have no idea what our music stands for, right?"

Have you attracted any label interest yet? What is your favourite label?

"Well, we haven't sent the demo to any labels and I don't have a fave label."

Do you think you are influenced by early bands (Venom, Destruction, Bulldozer, etc.) or newer bands such as Emperor, Immortal, Darkthrone, etc.? What are your fave bands?

"I still listen to a lot of old black and thrash metal LPs from Hellhammer/Celtic Frost, Destruction, Exhumer, Sodom, Venom, Slayer, Deathrow, Voivod, Sacrifice, Kreator, Whiplash and of course Bulldozer (killer!). So I think I'm more musically influenced by these bands than by, for example, Immortal or Emperor. I don't listen to many new black metal bands, only to Rotting Christ, Emperor, Enslaved, Mortem, Algor and a few others."

I haven't seen any photos of you so what kind of look do you have? Is it an occult/dark image?

"There are no band photos of us so far. Our image is more in the occult way, but we don't paint ourselves with blood to go out in the street..."

Are you into mutilating yourself and others? Have you ever thought of setting yourself on fire and seeing what happens?

"Our lead guitarist, The Ghost, who lives in the woods, does some self mutilation by tattooing his arms and legs with a needle. He enjoys it to feel the pain. As for setting myself on fire, I once burned my hair by accident, but it wasn't very funny."

What are your fave fanzines?

"I've got no fucking idea 'cause I've only got a few and they're not worth mentioning."

The next release of Pazuzu will be...

"Another demo, I guess, in '94."

Future plans, last words?

"Future plans are still open. We just will be doing a few songs for the next demo, that's all. As for now, we're selling our "Conjurations" demo for five dollars in Europe and six overseas, so don't wait to get it! Thanx a lot for the interview Ross and send some abyssic regards to all your readers."

Pazuzu, Ob. Muehlemastr. 52, CH-4800 Zofingen, Switzerland.

Throne of Acad

What bands have influenced your sound?

"I have not been influenced by any band because my music is just unholy blackness and evil not like all those trendy bands."

How do you find it living in Israel? Have any churches been burned down in the Holy Land?

"Living in Israel sucks but because of it being the Holy Land our war will be easier as we don't have to travel the world. I don't know about any church that was burned but if there was, smart thing to do."

What was Elcazar in jail for?

"Elcazar was selling hard drugs to little girls in the age of 11 or 12 years old."

How did you come up with your names and are they accurate descriptions of yourselves?

"The meaning of Elcazar in Hebrew is God is stranger. He think that God is the stranger and Satan should rule. I am Perverter Goat because I have a goat at home and I have fucked her once."

Is it hard to find books on the occult in Israel? What books do you own and do these influence your lyrics?

"It is very hard to get unholy books here. I own the unholy Necronomicon (it has taken 2 years to get it) and the book Two Men From Eden. My lyrics are from the Necronomicon."

How is the scene in your country and are there any other black metal bands you can recommend?

"Lately there are a lot of new bands but all of them are sucking my dick to be friends of mine. There are two other black metal bands - Impurity that we have fought and Acheron Gates who are my best friends and they are such a good black metal band."

Have Throne of Acad ever played live?

"We do not have shows. I don't like the idea although many asked us to have a show. I all the time design Acheron Gates' shows. They throw flesh on the crowd and they come on dressed like the Inquisition. Once Elcazar cut off a dog's head on stage and threw it to me."

What is your opinion on religion in general?

"Okay, I hate Christians and Jews and all the religions. I think that pagan religion is very primitive, but I believe in Satan and I am not trendy."

What will your next release be? Would you like to record a 7" or LP?

"I don't know about our next release. I don't want to be like Apator."

Merchandise, last words and future plans?

"We sell our demo for \$5 and shirt for \$11. Kill for Satan!!! Hail Satan!! Thanx to you. Fuck all the men, long live the beast!"

Drink the Blood of Jesus c/o Tal Katz, Caspari 24, Haifa 34677, Israel.

Dogmeat

How have your demos sold so far and how has the response been?

"The demos have sold about 100-150 each. I'm not sure about the exact amount. The overall response on both demos, especially "A Prayer to the Dog" has been surprisingly positive. Of course, not everyone has liked them, but most people have. Many have said that it's original, and that's just great as that's what I am trying to be!"

On your latest flyers you describe your sound as "metal"...

"Yeah, I know it's a fucking lousy description, as it doesn't really tell anything about the music. I could've stated the music as being industrial metal, but the music isn't that. Everyone else seems to disagree though! I'd say the music is alternative metal with some industrial elements or something like that. (I wonder why all bands find it so hard to describe their own music?)"

Did you run into any problems over the cover of your "Revolution Paradise" demo?

"Nothing serious, though I'm sure that some people didn't like the cover at all (to put it mildly), and therefore didn't order the tape. I've explained the concept in many 'zines but it seems that everybody doesn't even want to hear. The cover was never meant to be nazi propaganda. Nevertheless, it was great to see the cover raised more negative than positive opinions. Maybe there's still some hope left!"

There was quite an interesting concept behind that cover, so what about the latest one?

"The basic concept behind "A Prayer to the Dog" is religion (surprise, surprise). Actually it's this old theme - who's God - who's dog? As every one of these religions state that their way is the right way, some of them must be wrong - sending a prayer to the dog..."

Have you ever eaten dogmeat?

"No. Have you?"

There are quite a few black/death metal bands in your country - are you interested in them? Do you feel most of the people writing to you are into this music?

"Yeah, I'm glad that most of the Finnish bands in the black/death genre are quite listenable and there are not so many copy bands like in e.g. Sweden. Surely I have my own favourites among them, though I don't listen to that kind of music much nowadays. Most of the people who have ordered my tape are metal fans and that's okay with me. Though I've heard that some people who don't dig metal at all have listened to my songs and found them interesting, and that's just great."

Have you had any label interest to make an LP?

"Well, yes there has been some label interest. As nothing is sure yet, I wish not to tell any more about this, sorry!"

Do you ever plan to expand the line-up beyond one person? Do you find it easier to compose songs on your own?

"Never say never, but I think that Dogmeat will remain a one man band. It just started out this way and as it works out really well, why change it? There's less arguments! It's quite easy for me to write songs by myself (I've always done that, even in "real" bands), so there haven't been any problems so far."

Seeing as you're the only member of the band, what do the other members do in their spare time?

"Oh yeah, the accordion player just went on a world tour, you know. He plays Caribbean tribal music with distorted panflutes in the background. Sounds great, huh? The tour lasts about 18 months, so meanwhile we took a one-handed and blind saxophone player (playing with his toes) from this dance group so that the rhythm would remain as heavy as ever. The machine (you know, drums) is currently having a rest now, though it has a passionate going-on with the dishwasher. The bassist just cut off his head, so I think we'll have to take in a mezzo-soprano female singer to double the guitar riffs with me... Actually, I don't know any filthy details about their spare time, it's enough pain for me trying to play with them!"

Is Finland a good place to live?

"Yes, I think generally it's a good place to live as everything is so peaceful and quiet and shit like that. The nature is really beautiful but sometimes it's irritating when nothing really happens here. But I guess my opinions would be same no matter where I live, who knows?"

What has influenced Dogmeat? Have many compared you to Godflesh and do you think this is fair?

"The most important influence is Black Sabbath, those gods of metal. I think their influence can be heard in some riffs, song structures and maybe some lyrics. And of course industrial is an influence, especially those industrial bands such as Godflesh and Ministry. Also some alternative rock/metal bands such as Waltari, Faith No More and Nirvana. Death/whatever metal in general has influenced me, and maybe that can also be heard. Plus probably some jazz/mainstream. Generally I try to take influences from everything, as that makes the music more variable. If someone wants to compare Dogmeat to Godflesh that's okay with me. I only agree that the first demo "Revolution Paradise" sounded sometimes like Godflesh."

What's your favourite LP of all time and this year?

"All-time favourites include of course Black Sabbath's first album (at least). This year's favourite so far must be Front 242's "06:24:03:11 Up Evil". Great industrial stuff, though not so metal, but who cares!"

What do you do outside Dogmeat - work, etc.?

"Right now I'm unemployed, but my military service is frighteningly close. Most of my spare time activities are connected with music, not only Dogmeat."

What will the future bring? Last words?

"I hope the future will bring some kind of deal (hopefully a good one) to this one man band. But if not, I'll have to continue to make these demos. Thanks a lot for the interview, Ross! Thanks for reading this. Order "A Prayer to the Dog"! Dogmeat c/o Mikko Muranen, Ruskokuja 2 as. 17, 17200 Vaasky, Finland."

Nordor

Do the ideas behind the band remain the same to this day as when you started?

"Yes, the ideas are the same and our feelings and our dark beliefs are the same. Nothing has changed."

Obscure Plasma has now released the "His Fictitious Grandeur" EP... are you happy with the work of Obscure Plasma?

"No, because 3-4 days ago I heard from a friend and not from Obscure Plasma that our stuff for a 7" will be out on a professional tape. We didn't know anything about a tape, we were wanting a vinyl project. It is a rip-off for us. I haven't received a letter from OP Records for 3 months."

What will the next release be? Have you had any label interest?

"We will see. We have three new songs and we are thinking for a mini-LP. I have contacts with 10-11 labels and the future will show us the right way."

How do you describe your sound and how will it develop on future releases? Do you feel the surroundings that you play in are important?

"It will be the same Nordorian sound. Yes, very much. We always practice at night with low red lights in our studio."

Have you played any live shows? Who with? What was the last band you saw live?

"We did a gig in May of '91 after the release of our demo. It was great. The other groups were Septicaemia, Epidemic, Altar, Acid Death and Malicious Dead. Now we don't like to do live shows, so many posers. The last band was Rotting Christ in May of '93."

Do you think the Greek scene is good? Best bands? Do you think there are too many trendy bands around in the scene at the moment?

"I don't care. Rotting Christ, Varathron, Nergal, Necromantia, Disharmony. Yes, lots of them. KILL THE POSERS!"

What instrument do you think is the most important in Nordor?

"These are our weapons. Inside of them we create our evil feelings and with them you can hear what we feel in this world of false light. Our sound is very original and this is good for us. We want to be different from the masses."

The photo on your flyer is one of the strangest I've seen. Perhaps you could tell us a bit about it?

"It is taken with a professional camera of my sister. She knows how to do miracles with it. I don't know anything about it."

What are your lyrics about on the tracks "Inside the Clouds" and "Entering into the Psychotic Dimensions"?

"The "Inside the Clouds" song, our dark animal that sleeps all the time inside our mind 'til it awakes and finally we found we found our true beliefs and the right way to eternity. "Entering into the Psychotic Dimensions" hasn't any lyrics. In this song I'm losing my soul into the darkness and I try to speak about it with my screams."

Last words and future plans?

"Thanks for the interview. We have T-shirts (\$13) and new material (CrO tape, \$6). Our first demo is not out now. We stopped selling it after 666 copies. The future will show us future plans. If you want to lose your soul you must write to us, otherwise you will rot in Heaven."

Nordor c/o P. Christoforidis, Eptalofu 1 Nea Ionia, 14231 Athens, Greece.

Graveland

Firstly please give a brief history of Graveland. What influenced you to start the band?

"Graveland was born in the unholy winter of 1991 as a one man band created by Rob Darken. In 1992 Graveland released its first demo "Necromanteion", but one promo tape this same year later. The true face of evil was shown in the Autumn of 1992. At the cold depressive night Darken recorded "Drunemeton" promo tape. Really dark, evil and uncommon music. In the beginning of 1993 I, Capricornus, joined the band as a drummer. Some months later we recorded our "In the Glare of the Burning Churches" demo and a promo called "Epilogue" (the last act of Graveland as a one man band) has appeared on Witching Hour Productions. Darkness was the only influence for our dark souls and this is the reason we play unholy black metal! Actually, we've recorded our "The Celtic Winter" mini-CD, which should be out on Hammer of Damnation Productions in April. The present line-up is: Darken (guitar, vocals, keyboards), Capricornus (drums) and Karcharoth (guitar)."

How has the arrangement turned out with Witching Hour Productions? What other stuff has this label release and what will it release in future?

"Witching Hour Productions was the only true black metal label in Poland, so when they proposed us to produce our demo we couldn't refuse. At the moment this label released two tapes of Graveland and soon demos of Xantotol and Infernum will be out there."

Does the title of your demo "In the Glare of the Burning Churches" refer to the ones in Norway? Are you part of any Satanic movement?

"No it doesn't. This title has a deeper meaning. It is just the ultimate form of hatred towards Christianity. Actually, two churches have been burnt down in Poland and probably there will be more. We have our own Tenebrarian circle called the Temple of the Fullmoon. I think details are not important."

Have you had any label interest? Do you make much money from Graveland?

"As I mentioned, we are going to release "The Celtic Winter" mini-CD on Hammer of Damnation Productions. Also our debut LP/CD called "Carpathian Wolves" should be out on the young, promising Polish label Eternal Devils Records this spring. I don't think we've made any money selling our demos."

Are there any bands in Poland you can recommend? Have you played any gigs?

"The only true black metal bands from Poland are Graveland, Mysteries, Infernum, Xantotol, Belthil and maybe Fullmoon. They all belong to the Temple of the Fullmoon. They create a powerful legion! Other bands I can recommend for black metal listeners are Behemoth and North. We didn't play any gigs because we won't play for any trendy, funny, weak, moshing audience that usually go to gigs. Fuck 'em all hard!"

Why do you wear corpsepaint? Do you have swords, axes, etc.?

"Corpsepaint and our swords and axes are very symbolic. It is a part of a warrior's equipment. We started the war for the pagan rebirth. Our hearts are full of ancient wrath, we pledged our swords to gods of darkness and we are going to die with honour."

What are your fave bands?

"Bathory (old), Emperor, De Vermis Mysteriis, In the Woods, Sabazius, Burzum, Necromantia, Pocolus, Azubham Haani, Mayhem, Venom (old), Enslaved, Arcturus, Carpathian Forest, Von and many others. I also listen to NS bands such as: No Remorse, Storkraft, Endstufe, Honor, Konkwista 88, Kahlkopf. I like only hateful music."

Did things not used to be quite hard in your country with not much in the shops and so on? How are things these days? Is it hard to find and buy good instruments and equipment?

"Actually shops in Poland are full of this whole shit. The only problem is economical situation of society, everything is bloody expensive, people lose their job, money you get every month enough for food but nothing more... Communism was really fuckin' thing, but this new democracy leads my country to devastation. Foreign countries and Jewish lobbies buy most attractive factories and even parts of Slavonic land! This blind society is lost! From inside it's destroyed by Christianity... soon they will know that war is the only redemption! I cry for the years of lost pride and strength of our tribe!"

Last words, future plans and merchandise?

"Thank for your support. Watch out for our forthcoming CD releases and buy our 'In the Glare...' demo - it's still available for \$3 (USD), true unholy black metal cult! May the gods be with you! Hail Cromm!"

Graveland c/o Capricornus, 9-go Maja 36/5, 51-671 Wrocław, Poland.

No Fashion Records

When did you start Putrefaction 'zine and No Fashion Records?

"I started Putrefaction 'zine in the beginning of 1989, and now I have come out with 7 issues! The 8th issue will be out this autumn! No Fashion I did start with in March 1992 and now it is a good underground label I think."

Yes indeed, but what do you look for in a band before you sign them?

"That they play good music. Most of my bands are in the black/death metal vein 'cause I really die for this music! But I also love old hardrock, so bands who play hardrock in the old way, please send me your demo. I will probably sign you!"

Do you think the Swedish scene is getting better? What are your fave Swedish bands?

"Yeah, the Swedish scene is in my opinion one of the best in the world. My fave Swedish bands are Dissection, Merciless, Unanimated, Tiamat, At the Gates, Katatonia and more!"

Are any of your releases limited?

"Yes, the Bestial Summoning LP is in limited edition of 1000 copies 'cause that one is a real bad release and it has sold only about 700 copies in about a year!"

What happened to the Lemegethon MLP that you were going to release ages ago?

"The Lemegethon mini-LP will not be out on my label. I was very interested in them but then I realised that I could find better bands!"

Is Marduk now on Osmose?

"Yes, Marduk are now an Osmose band and I think I have lost a killer band, but we are still friends and so on! By the way, look out for their second album in August, it'll blow 'Dark Endless' away!"

Fave 'zine, book, LP, film?

"Zines: Slayer, Mega Mag! Book: Kalle Anka Råder Igen. Film: Cannibal Holocaust. LP: Merciless - 'The Treasures Within'."

Did you offer Impaled Nazarene a contract?

"Yes, but they were already an Osmose band."

How many copies of each No Fashion release have you sold? Do you or the bands make any money?

"Fester has sold 1,500 copies, Marduk 2,500-3,000 copies, Unanimated 1,500. I try to live on this and the band has a good deal, so they get a little bit of money!"

Future releases (2nd Bestial Summoning LP)?

"Future releases are LPs with Throne of Ahaz, Dissection, Katatonia and Merciless. Also a maxi-CD with Unanimated! No more Bestial Summoning!"

Does the black/death metal scene have a future?

"Yeah, I really think a lot of people have stopped to listen to this ordinary death metal. Now they want to have some more aggressive stuff!"

Who will be in Putrefaction 8?

"Merciless, all the No Fashion bands, At the Gates, Mayhem and more!"

What is your favourite interview you've ever done?

"I think it's all those sick Merciless interviews, really sick to make them!"

Any last words?

"Thank for this interview! Look out for all No Fashion releases, soon they are out in all record shops! Cheers!"

No Fashion Records, PO Box 217, 645 23 Strängnäs, Sweden.

Behemoth

When did you start Behemoth and what inspired you to form a black metal band?

"Behemoth waked up to live in the end of '91, then apocalyptic beast was born to fight with Christianity and usurp God. The primeval instincts were born deep in the heart of winterevil wood... Black metal is the only way of truth and we summation to it! Hate!"

How did the deal with Pagan records come about? Are you happy with their work so far? How many copies of the "Return..." cassette EP have you sold so far?

"Pagan Records is a great deal with some evil bands. Tomasz is a big fan of black metal, so why wouldn't he be interested in the best black metal horde in Poland? Of course our work is really great and 'The Return...' sold about 1300 copies and it still sells. Now, the newer stuff has better promotion than the old one and soon we'll record the debut CD!!!"

Are you making money from Behemoth?

"We receive some money from Pagan Records but all of it I put into equipment and November's studio session. We don't look for money from Behemoth! We aren't this kind of band who only think about this shit! Of course money is a big problem and it's important here but I worship higher ideas in my life!"

Are you involved with the Temple of the Fullmoon? Do you have a good scene in Poland? Good Bands?

"I support the Temple of the Fullmoon and the bands involved in the circle! They make great work in this fuckin' underground scene which is full of trendy idiots! The strongest and the truest Polish black metal hordes are Graveland and Behemoth! I also support others: Mysteries, Infernum, Mastiphal, North and Sacrilgium! Death metal scene is trendy here, a lot of childish people... In this style I prefer only Christ Agony and Neolithic! The rest of them are pure trend!!!"

Faves and influences of Behemoth?

"Musical influences and faves are: Bathory, Emperor, Enslaved, Burzum, Mayhem, old Sarcophago, old-Destruction, Sodom, Venom, Mercyful Fate, Satyricon, Cradle of Filth, Running Wild, TSA, Kat, Manaam, Dead Can Dance, Fields of the Nephilim, Love Like Blood, Sisters of Mercy, Black Sabbath, Graveland, Das Ich, Ministry, Immortal, Master's Hammer, Root, Funeral Winds, Grand Belial's Key, Behemoth and a lot of other evil and extreme bands..."

Do you play live shows? Are you into fire breathing, church burning, etc.?

"We don't play live shows. Maybe in the future we'll play a tour with only pagan barbaric hordes. Time will show! About church burning, I support all kinds of desecrations, we are also into fire breathing."

Is it hard to get hold of occult books in Poland? What books do you own or have you read?

"Here is very poor situation with occult books. Here there's not any true occult magica masterpieces in the shops, only some copies which don't give any true knowledge. I must get this stuff from underground post. But I'm more into paganism and tradition of Slavs from my area. So more interesting for me are pagan mythology books."

Where do you get lyrical influences?

"Some books influenced me a little, but I get more influences to write my lyrics from the nature in my area, mighty vast forests, wastelands, pagan landscapes, the Baltic sea... also all what I met in this fuckin' hated life influenced me a little bit. Hail Perun, God of Thunder!"

Does each member have a job? How is the Polish economical situation at the moment?

"It's very hard to live in a country full of corrupts, politics, but I don't care about this situation! Now all of Behemoth members learn in local schools. We also have problems with money for equipment, sessions for example, so sometimes we must work..."

What is your opinion on La Vey's Satanic Bible?

"Some years ago I was very interested in his church. It gave me special opinions about this life and all that deals with it! Now I hate this corrupt church which only looks for money! I hate his lightness, goodness, so-called 'Satanism' which never had a connection with pure evil cult! Here in Poland we fight with all La Vey worshippers which are the same enemies as Christians!!!"

Have you had any label interest? What will you next release?

"Some labels were interested in a CD of Behemoth but now we are signed to Pagan Records for this mighty CD which will be titled 'Sventevith Storming Near the Baltic'!!!"

Last words?

"Stay anti-La Vey! Support pagan cultures!!!"

Behemoth c/o Nergal, Pomorska 14 g/9, 80-333 Gdansk, Poland.

Ancient

When did you form Ancient and what influenced you to play black metal? Which bands have influenced you musically?

"I started my own solo project in the autumn of 1992. In January '93 I started playing with Abyssus (vocalist and drummer) and the band was started. We found our name at the same time. I can't really say that any special bands influenced us to start the band. But I am the one who makes all the music and I guess old Bathory, old Venom, Darkthrone and a few more might be seen as my inspirations, but it's also a bit wrong to say that they have directly inspired me as I only make the music straight from my heart without any attempt to create a special type of music, really."

You call your music "evil fiend metal". Did you deliberately avoid the term black metal? What is your opinion of the black metal scene in your country? Would you say it is the best in the world? What is the current situation like in Norway concerning the church burnings, grave desecrations and so on?

"The truth is that I don't give a shit what people call our music. I'm very satisfied with it and that's the only thing that really matters. The Norwegian black metal scene is the biggest and best in the world. Though there seems to be a lot of kids nowadays starting to jump on the black metal bandwagon. It's always like that when a new music style becomes popular. There has not been any churches burned since Count Grishnackh was put in jail, as far as I know."

Have you had any label interest so far? How has the response been to your demo and how many copies have you sold?

"Yes, Head Not Found and No Fashion are both interested in us, but we want a better, not necessarily bigger, label. We will send out copies of our debut album when it's mixed in April. The response has been incredible to our demo. It was released late '93 and now (late February '94) we have sold about 550 copies!"

Are you into anything other than black/death metal music?

"I am into music like old Mercyful Fate and King Diamond, The Gathering, old Ozzy, old Accept, old Dio, old Metallica and Ho Snorse."

What sort of books do you read and do these influence your lyrics?

"I don't read that many books really. But all kinds of stuff about the occult, Satanism, sorcery, magic and also some Stephen King. I don't write any lyrics, so I can't say they do, but I guess Abyssus is quite inspired by such things when he is out in the forest writing lyrics."

What do you think of bands who have an upside down cross in their logo without any thought behind it?

"It sounds stupid to me, but I think many bands have their logo made by people outside the band, and that's maybe the reason why there are so many bands with inverted crosses and pentagrams in their logos."

What was the first black/death album you heard? What's your favourite LP of all time?

"I think it must have been Venom - 'Black Metal' back in 1983. It made a very big impression on me at the time, I still get a very special feeling when I listen to that album. My favourite LP ever must be King Diamond - 'Abigail'. It has everything I want from a band. Melody, heaviness and atmosphere. It's a real masterpiece."

Last words and future plans?

"We have just got a new bass player, so I think we will do many live gigs in the future. Thanks for the interview, it was above average."

Ancient, Box 6, 5082 Eidsvagneset, Norway.

Funeral Winds

When was Funeral Winds formed? Why did you form a black metal band?

"Funeral Winds was formed four years ago by Gorgoroth and me. At that time we had no name for the band. When Esteban joined us in '92 everything happened very fast. (It was also Esteban who came up with the band name). We released the demo/rehearsal followed by the 'La Majeste Infernale' demo '93 and soon our 'Resurrection' demo on Pagan Records. We saw it as our duty to form a black metal band to preach the orders of war and destruction..."

How many copies of the demo have you sold? Any label interest?

"Our 'Majeste Infernale' sold around 250 copies until now and we got positive reactions (most compared us with old Bathory - seems very positive to me!) There is some interest by a few labels but we didn't sign anything yet."

Are you influenced by old or new bands?

"We are influenced by both older and newer bands. I prefer the older ones above the newer, but I listen also to the newer bands. I think that everything you listen to influences you. Our early songs are more like the older bands, our newer songs like the newer bands, because now we have two guitars so I can make different riffs played together. It sounds more like Burzum, etc."

Have you played many gigs? Who with and what do your shows involve?

"We played two gigs so far, both at the Bardeg in Rotterdam. This first gig was with Engraved, the childish Occult and Ancient Rites, the second on a metal festival. Of course we have corpsepaint, etc. and torches, blood, some stage decoration. On the metalfest we caused fire and the burning stuff fell on my distortion and wires. Most left the Bardeg immediately because of the smoke but others stayed for another track."

Are you a member of any Satanic organisation? What do you think of the Anton La Vey and his Church of Satan?

"I am of the Xul Legion (one of the true armies of Satan) and we do our best to win this war. The Xul Legion is working together with a black coven called Ex Odal Tridens. The Church of Satan is a fake Satanist movement and must fuck off. They give the wrong picture of Satanism, it's a disgrace to the true Satanist!"

Do you take advantage of the legalisation of cannabis in your country?

"Sometimes, but I prefer beer. Getting drunk makes you aggressive, getting stoned makes you tired."

What weapons do you possess and where did you get them?

"You can easily buy swords, crossbows, etc. at antique shops here. I have knives, a metal claw and some other weapons which I don't know the name of."

What will you do when you are an old man?

"Search for a new body to possess, kill myself and go to my infernal master or use my age as a sort of disguise (who expects that an old senile man kills Jehovahs and burns churches?)... I shall see."

What is the house you live in like?

"Soon I will live in another house but where I live now the walls are decorated with covers of Venom LPs, old Possessed and Slayer posters, Venom and Slayer flags, Baphomets... everywhere are candles, etc."

What will the next Funeral Winds release be? Tell us something about the T-shirts you are for sale.

"Our next release will be our 'Resurrection' demo on Pagan Records which includes two new studio songs and two live songs. We have blasphemous T-shirts for \$17, both sides printed, with unholy desecrating texts and a picture of Jesus being mocked, of course back T-shirts."

Last words?

"Serve Satan as best you can, be his slave. War, rape, slavery..."

Funeral Winds c/o Gorgoroth, Vizeveld 34, 3085 re Rotterdam, Holland.

Thus Defiled

What have you been doing since the recording of "Blasphemous Covenant"? Any new songs and how if at all is your new material different to old?

"Basically, we've been writing new material, practising a lot and doing a few gigs. To date we have 11 completed songs. The newer ones we think are more sinister musically than some of our older stuff but still totally extreme and black."

Do you consider yourselves "true"? What do you think of the UK black metal scene?

"We are a true black metal band, but we don't run about burning down churches or issuing death threats to other bands or shit like that. As for black UK bands, Cradle of Filth are the best band in Britain. Xaztur will also be a band to look out for, and Cruentus play good black/death. The scene is small, but it's better to have a few good and original black bands than a load of Norway clones (who are bound to appear after all the exposure) jumping on the bandwagon and who know nothing about black metal."

What country do you think has the best scene? Fave bands?

"Norway definitely has the best black scene. My favourite band is Enslaved, but they have many great bands there."

What are your links with Necrosanct?

"We're all good friends. We're the only two extreme bands in our part of the country. Nick (our drummer) has known them long before Necrosanct ever existed. Ant (Necrosanct vocals and bass) helped us out with the production of our first demo tape which was great, as very few producers understand extreme music at all."

Do you use corpsepaint? Your opinions on it?

"We sometimes use corpsepaint, not always. There are a lot of good bands that wear corpsepaint, it looks cool. I think Hellhammer did it best many years ago, though."

What do you think about the activities in Norway by bands like Mayhem, Burzum, etc.?

"What they believe in is good, the way they do things is bad. The purpose of black metal is no longer hidden from those who now oppose us."

Have you had any label interest? What label would you most like to sign with?

"We've had a lot of label interest and we should have a 7" EP out late '93. We would ideally like to be with Osmose or DSP."

What bands have you played live with? Does your show involve anything outrageous?

"The big bands we've played with are Blasphemy, Gorguts, Necrosanct and Flesh, as well as many underground bands. No, we don't do anything outrageous on stage."

What will your next release be?

"We're recording our cassette EP 'Enchanted by the Dark One' at the end of August, and it will hopefully be out October time."

Do you listen to "normal" death metal? Do you listen to any bands that are not death/black metal?

"I listen to no normal death metal; it holds nothing for me. I listen to a few true death bands like R'lyeh (Mex), Doom Snake Cult (US), etc. As for bands that are not black/death, old Mercyful Fate, old Destruction, Eterne and very few others."

Last words?

"Our 'Blasphemous Covenant' demo is available for £2/\$4 and evil T-shirts for £7.50/\$15. Hail to darkness!"

Thus Defiled c/o Paul Carter, 4 Greenacres Ring, Angmering, W. Sussex BN16 4BU, England.

Apator

Do some people mock you or take you as a big joke?

"I take myself very seriously, and that's what counts. I started doing Apator in October 1989 and I'm still doing this one man band now (7/1993) and I still haven't changed the

Apator style in all these years. I have two Apator tattoos on my face (one on my left temple and one above my right eyebrow) and I have cut the word Apator into my right arm. I'm more serious than any other band."

Do you sell much stuff? How is the response?

"I sold 15 copies of the Apator/Exmortes EP and I gave for free/traded 74 copies. 'Apator Prays for the Arrival of the Antichrist in 1993' demo sold 11 copies and I gave away/traded 27 copies. Apator's new demo 'Apator's Stiff Cock Points to the Heavenly Sky' has been released in 7/1993 and so far I've sold 2 copies and I gave away/traded 6 copies. Some people like the music and some do not, but that's not really the point. Apator is here to spread the anti-Christian message."

Is there anything you love or are you just full of hate? If so, what makes you so? Do you get beaten up much?

"Yes, I feel a lot of hate. I guess it's because I do not feel at ease in this stupid thing called life. I don't love people, I just feel respect for some people. I have been beaten up one time, and I'm closely holding an eye on those two persons. They are doomed but they don't know it yet."

Is Apator music? How did the split EP go down?

"Apator is the anti-Christian message shaped into some sort of music I call 'vocal hate'. Jan 'Vempus' List (ex-Exmortes and now member of the two man band Rites of Eleusis) and I decided to do the split EP and pay for it ourselves. You see, we are both intense about our music."

Tell us something about your live shows!

"During live shows I perform naked. I like to show my little dick to the wimp audience. I hate to see black metal bands with their orthodox corpsepaint and holding their candles."

What do you think of the church burnings?

"I think burning churches, destroying temples, crushing synagogues and all the other holy places is a good way to insult the hypocrite religious fuckers."

Are you into mellow/peaceful music?

"I'm only into aggressive metal. I especially like crude/raw metal with barking vocals and simple riff structures like Nun Slaughter (USA). But my ultimate metal band is Apator."

Do you not find it hard to find a venue that will let you perform?

"Yes, Apator isn't mainstream metal and not commercial so club owners (most of them anyway) aren't interested in any Apator show. Last time I performed live (6/1993) I paid 500 Guilder (it is about 150 English pounds) to hire this small concert room in order to deliver the anti-Christian message."

Are you a disturbed individual?

"I think I'm not any more confused than other people on this planet. Maybe some people think I'm nuts but that's because they are way too orthodox."

Have you had any label interest?

"No, and I'm quite satisfied spreading Apator's music by way of selling demo tapes. Apator has not a professional recording sound and it would not be any use to press it on some CD."

What do you have for sale at the moment?

"Part of this question I already answered. About the price, each item costs just \$3 everywhere. Demo bands, let's trade our stuff so I can review your stuff in my 'zine Humble Return of Christ and Horny Mohammed (issue 3 out September 1993)."

What is the house you live in like?

"I live alone. The house I live in is pretty normal. My house isn't a mess but it's not that tidy either. Lots of bare walls."

Future plans of Apator?

"Spreading Apator's microphone crushing vocal hate by doing live shows and releasing demo tapes. People get in touch, I always answer letters. Hail to Ross for giving me the opportunity to speak my mind in his blasphemous Into the Woods 'zine. Good luck with the 'zine!"

Apator, Meiendaal 99, 3075 KG Rotterdam, Holland.

Azhubham Haani

Angramainyo, why do you have no logo?

"No logo. No photo. No fucking promo stuff at all!"

What is the line-up and when was the band formed?

"The line-up is: Angramainyo - vocals, drums, lyrics, songwriting; Bathim - bass guitar; Magnus - guitar; Theodor - violin. The band was started in 1987, 1989, 1990 and 1992. I'm the only one who's been in the band all the time."

Are you happy with the demo?

"No. It's not tight, the sound is amateurish, the riffs are boring, everything is wrong. Our future material will crush everything. People seem to like it anyway, which is cool."

Do you use corpsepaint? If so, why?

"Not anymore. I've always used corpsepaint, as I think that real death metal bands should use it, but the last two years I have dropped it. Now every new band is posing around with their 'evil' corpsepaint. It seems it's more important to look evil than making evil music. Sick."

Who would you say you are influenced by?

"The demo and the other old stuff is influenced by Bathory and Sodom. The new stuff is more influenced by Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Verdi, Sibelius and other classical composers. Our new stuff will be much more symphonic and epic. Nothing like the old shit."

I say church burnings...

"I say kids who think they must pose around like that to be accepted in the scene. Burning churches and desecrating graves is for 15 year old kids. Could someone tell me what's so evil about burning churches? I just see it as immature."

Best Swedish bands?

"Bathory's old stuff, Morbid's 'December Moon' demo, Katatonia, Gothmog are dark. The best band at the moment is without doubt the ultra-destructive Satanskin. Praise them!"

Have you had any label interest?

"Yes, but we won't release anything. I've been talking about 7"s, but I'm not interested in that anymore. Some labels have also been interested in releasing mini-LPs and LPs, but I'm not interested. Releasing records right now is just a way to promote the trend."

Any new songs? Are they different to old?

"No, we don't have any new songs. In the six months since the demo recording we haven't written anything at all. I have some plans though. The new material will definitely not be like the old shit in any way. The lyrics will be in Swedish from now on, and the music will be more symphonic, dark, original, hellish."

Is the future bleak for black/death metal?

"It's not bleak, it's black as the winter nights in Pitea. The trend will last for a couple of years, probably until 1997 or 1998. There are already tons of new bands who are doing their best to rip off Burzum or Celtic Frost off. One thing I really hate is that people can't tell the difference between black and death metal. Do black metal bands sing about eating carrots? Do death metal bands use Satanic lyrics? Was Bathory a black or death metal band? If you're more than fifteen years old you probably remember that Bathory has always been a death metal band, and nothing else."

How many copies of the demo have you sold?

"More than I had expected. Next time I won't spread as many flyers as I did this time."

Do you like Darkthrone's "Soulside..." LP?

"No. The lyrics are okay, but the music is a total trend product. I don't really like their second album either, it smells in a strange way. Can't really recognise the smell, it's kinda funny. Maybe it smells of Bathory rip-off."

Any comments on Abruptum's vision of a "forthcoming dark age"?

"That's just bullshit. The true ones are too few to be able to make a revolution or whatever. I believe more in a communistic world revolution than a Satanic dark age or anything like that."

How do you live your life?

"I live my life in a totally dark way. I burn churches every night and I kill life metalers. I hate Therion 'cos they're life metalers. The Count is the truest black metaler ever, I'm fifteen years old and I've been into black metal since 1976. When I started the first black metal band Venom were just ripping me off. Not really. I live a quite normal life with hard studies. I don't have any friends who are death or black metalers, as those sort of people mostly tend to be feeble-minded fucking imbeciles. Sometimes I even have some fun! I guess that's too wimpy for all the brutal black metalers who will read this 'zine."

Do you ever go into the woods?

"When I feel like it, but that's not very often. Mostly I sit at home and read a good book, and I'm not talking about the Satanic Bible if that's what you think when someone mentions the word 'book'. I'm doing some very serious alchemical studies, apart from my normal studies, and I also read everything I can find about occultism, Satanism, witches, alchemy, myths and traditions and religions in general. The violinist Theodor often spends some time strolling around in the woods, though. He says it gives him inspiration for his spiritual researches into his own soul."

Last words and future plans?

"Future plans: to release a new demo in 1995 or 1996. I'm not really sure, but it might be called 'Dodandet av Prastkonungen i Nema' or 'De Sju Inseglan'. Worship Jussi Bjorling and dark death metal. Hail Satan!"
Azhubham Haani c/o Linus Akerlund, Slovaret 18, S-74050 Alunda, Sweden.

Cradle of Filth

How did the recent tour with Emperor go? How did you manage to get put on the bill with a Christian band (Mourn)?

"The UK tour with Emperor went very well, so well in fact that we will be doing a European tour with them early next year. As for their personal everyday stance, they are good people and close friends. Our guitarist was due to stay over in Norway with Samoth a couple of weeks ago, but due to the Euronymous killing it was impossible to put on the show they were due to visit. Basically they are extremely passionate and creative people, more attuned to the darker aspects of our existence than most. As for Mourn, better to ignore this pathetic bunch of individuals and their vague, translucent relationship with their so-called 'doom council'. We have and will, if provoked, conflict with them."

What made you change from death to black metal? Do you think BM is now a trend? Is there a scene in the UK for BM bands? What do you think of the UK in scene general?

"The change was a gradual affair, culminating around November '92. The scene appears to be becoming a trend, but I believe people will overlook the fake, uncharacteristic types who mimic and imitate. There is no scene in the UK and hopefully it will remain this way. Of course there are plenty of wannabes, namely bands like Descent, The Fallen and Dead Christ. All cheap blood, Burzum firelighters and deep Catholic upbringings. These bands make me sick. As for the rest of the scene in general, there are some interesting bands around, too numerous to mention."

Tell us a bit about the 12".

"The 12" is now an LP on Cacophonous Records due for release on Samhain of this year. It will feature mostly new material on CD and gatefold LP formats and will be recorded at Academy Studios, Dewsbury. It will be a musical tribute to suppressed, dangerous emotions to the female Satanic principle inherent in true western philosophy."

Are you going on a European tour? Will you play Norway?

"Yes, we are looking forward to going abroad soon. Emperor have convinced us that the Norwegian crowd will be very appreciative of us."

Who influenced you to wear corpsepaint? Is it a trend now?

"Martin Ain. We were wearing the warpaint as far back as the Marquee Cannibal Corpse support in London. Is it a trend? Isn't anything that provokes mystery and limited understanding amid weaker factions?"

How many of the infamous T-shirts have you sold?

"The 'Fuck Your God' shirts have sold very well. Our new line of merchandise, the incessantly misunderstood 'Jesus is a cunt' long-sleeves are only now available by mailorder. The price is £10/\$20 inc. p&p from the Cacophonous Records address and all shirts are full printed in L or XL. No responsibility will be held for fanatical religious interference, however."

What bands have influenced the new COF compositions?

"The bands more likely to influence our present compositions would be, probably, Merciful Fate, Dissection, Celtic Frost, NME, The Doors, Paradise Lost (circa 'Gothic'), Bathory, Limbo, etc. The six of us all have separate musical tastes and influences so it is hard to pinpoint one source."

You once said "We are not one of the pseudo-Satanic groups"... is this still the case? What are your lyrics about and do you take them seriously?

"I still maintain this philosophy, 'pseudo' meaning fake, fictitious or pretend. We are a genuine Satanic group, not one of these cardboard cut-out lay preachers of fake Satanic doctrine. This is what makes us the only true band in the UK. Pretence unintended, I promise. Our lyrics concern the emergence of a new Satanic age wrapped in the lupine sinews of dark female principle, sinister hermetic magick, Eros and Thanatos ritual sexuality and every conceivable path that leads to self-gratification through the darkest arts. Yes, we take them seriously. It is our fucking lives we're dealing with here. No one lays claim to be darker-than-thou in Cradle of Filth; you only got a true answer because you asked! We have no need to openly broadcast our beliefs to all and sundry; we have no desire to do so."

Do you have any plans to start a British black metal mafia?

"Only showmen confess to personal terrorism. We have other ways of revealing our intent. A British black metal circle would, basically, be a complete joke. Perhaps others will venture at some future point, I don't know. Cradle of Filth work alone as a band; outside of the music we do have contacts obviously and we profoundly refuse to fuel others' childish fantasies by prostituting our beliefs."

Do you listen to anything other than black/death metal?

"Of course. Anything that sweeps away my soul and arouses me, especially dark and lurid music from abroad."

Was there not a line-up change recently? Why?

"Nick Barker, formerly of UK death combo Monolith, has been added to our ranks. The line-up change came only days before the Emperor tour, requiring extensive practice and a relocation to East Anglia for Nick. His role in the band became available after our previous drummer had a slight problem with his (previous) drug habit. We parted on very good terms and have never looked back, despite our close friendship with the person in question."

What do your parents think when they see you in paint, etc.? Do you also wear black clothes, spikes, etc.?

"My physical parents have come to understand my often bizarre ways after twenty years of forgivable ignorance. I think they finally gave up questioning me when some wacky medical document suggested that a significant loss of blood had been reported on two separate incidents. If they had asked, I would have told them what happened... I had a run-in with a kitchen implement. As for dress, we wear what we'd wear if we were outside a band situation... flares, flowery waistcoats and 'Solstice are Wank' embroidered T-shirts."

Lat words and merchandise info?

"For info/T-shirts please feel free to write to the following address... Cacophonous Records, 231 Portobello Road, London W11 1LT, England. Our debut album entitled 'The Principle of Evil Made Flesh' shall be out early November '93 and if unavailable at music shops will be available by mailorder from the above address. Thanks again Ross, and may darkness find you."

GGFH

In November I managed to catch up with Brian Joseph Walls of GGFH (Global Genocide Forget Heaven) while he was touring with My Dying Bride. The other half of the band, Ghost, was refused entry to the UK so I asked Brian what the hell was going on...

"Well, um, let's see... Talk to Hammy about that. We're not getting along right now, me and the record company, we're having a fight, so right now all options have expired, ha ha! I might not even finish, I might not even play tonight, I might be going home. Not tonight, but soon 'cause they're fucking me around so."

Does it bother you what sort of a crowd you're attracting at concerts?

"No, it doesn't bother me. I'm amazed to see anybody there at all! What do you think?"

I think it's more metal fans.

"Well that was at Glasgow, it was, but we've been having some crowds that were more our crowd like in Cardiff, Liverpool and stuff like that. We really did well in London last night."

Did you have anything special with it being Halloween?

"Well, it was at the Marquee club. It was pretty cool: we had a giant fucking video screen that was, like, the size of the whole of the back wall. That was pretty cool, it was excellent."

Do you think you'll ever make a full length video with 8-10 songs on it?

"Oh, I don't think there are any videos in the pipeline for releasing. I'm not sure, though; they haven't told me anything about that."

What do you try to do to the viewers through your videos?

"Well... it's hard to do videos over there because we do 'em, send 'em over here, then they're no good and they won't get played because they're too violent, you know what I mean? So I don't think commercial videos is an area we're gonna be hitting, ha ha, unless it's mailorder or illegal."

How does the new stuff compare to the old stuff?

"It's more along the lines of 'Flesh' and 'Real'; it's more towards the techno side."

What are the lyrics about for the new songs?

"I don't have any yet - just music."

How many of the demos did you sell back in the early days and did you sell any outside America?

"Well, maybe a few got around outside America. I'm sure copies got sent outside America but we mostly sold them to people around the By Area and stuff like that. We sold several hundred of them, though."

How has 'Disease' sold?

"I think it's, like, 3000 or something like that."

Do you get much money from GGFH?

"No, not a penny, not a penny. Not a penny 'cause the company fucked up and wasted a lot of our money buying a lot of fucked up equipment, broken down stuff for the tour. That was Hammy's fuck-up. Broken slide projectors, broken TV sets, broken VCRs and he spent lots of money on it. So actually we're not making money yet. The tour is going real well but I think... you see, Peaceville's not paying me a single penny for this tour so it's starting to cost me too much money, and I said that I needed some money and they said 'Fuck you', so I think it might be over."

I heard that Ghost owes them a lot of money...

"Yeah, but that's not my fault, so they should... You know, I've always fulfilled... I gave them all the records they wanted and, I mean, my job is to go to the studio, right? To spend months making records and, you know, I'm not gettin' paid to tour and they're not being helpful, so I might just go home."

What bands have influenced you? What are you listening to at the moment? What about when you were first started the band?

"I listen to a lot of British techno and rave stuff. Back in the old days I listened to a lot of Throbbing Gristle, Skinny Puppy, Laibach, Frontline Assembly and Front 242... all the good ones. We like Gwar, we used to go see Gwar playing all the time back when they were first playing."

Ever thought of expanding the line-up beyond two people?

"I'm thinking about doing just the opposite and cutting it down to just me, ha ha!"

Are you thinking about kicking Ghost out?

"Well... no. I don't know... well, I think what I want to do is get different people to do partnerships with for different songs. I've actually got a producer in America who's gonna put out a couple 12" singles for me. That's the more techno/dancey stuff. What kind do you like, do you prefer the techno/dancey stuff or the guitar stuff?"

I'm more into the guitar stuff.

"Do you have our old demos... 'Halloween' or anything like that?"

Yeah, I've got that.

"Right, well I just remixed that. I got it made 27 songs, old songs, for one CD. But only 21 are going to be put on the CD."

When will that be out?

"Well, it was supposed to be out now, but the record company, they're not gonna put it out for a whole year!"

It comes across that you don't like America so much. If this is the case why don't you just move to Britain or something?

"I'd like to move to London, that'd be fun. If anybody wants to trade an apartment in London for an apartment in Oakland then I'll happily trade!"

Do you have any side projects going outside GGFH at the moment?

"Oh yeah, I do computer graphics for pretty good money..."

But what about music-wise?

"Oh, music-wise... Well, yeah, I'm doing these 12" singles. We're gonna have a well remix in San Francisco. A guy named EFX, he's gonna remix some of my new tracks. Should be cool..."

Will these 12"s be available over here in the UK?

"I don't know. They might be, but they're gonna be only vinyl, though, I think. There's some club promoters over there who are producing it. I mean, I'm producing it but they're paying for it, ha ha!"

Is it true that you have tombstones, tattoos, etc. around your apartment? Why do you have it this way and where do you get it from?

"Well, from friends and other graverobbers we might associate with. I just like the... you know, it's hard to get nice furniture made out of stone and wood and skin, so you just get it where you can find it."

Does it surprise you how Americanised the UK is?

"Oh yeah, it's kinda surprising. You don't have as many TV channels as we do but you're workin' on it, I can tell... everyone has satellite dishes outside their window."

Will you write about the Waco siege in future songs?

"Yeah, there's that and there's a murder trial about the kids who murdered their parents - I'm kinda into that one too. Yeah, there's a lot of good material to make songs about."

Did you ever go ahead with those simulated abortions?

"We did that in San Francisco but that's part of what Ghost was supposed to bring over. That didn't make it, of course..."

Do you think you will ever come back with Ghost?

"I doubt it. I don't know... I think the record company is gonna put anymore money into it anymore. I don't know... I think they're planning on killing us. So I feel, like, why am I bothering to do this whole tour if we're gonna get shut out, you know what I mean? It's a lot of work for nothing really. You want to put out our records?"

NO! I haven't the money, you know?

"We've had a lot of good responses, actually, every day. London was amazing, we really did well in London. So it's kinda sad that we might not be able to keep going with GGFH at this point. All I can say is write your letters to Peaceville and say you DEMAND more GGFH records, okay?"

Yeah, okay. Is that your last words?

"That's my last words. Thanks a lot, man!"

Throne of Ahaz

What has Throne of Ahaz been up to recently?

"The last few months we have done nothing. We haven't rehearsed anything since we recorded the LP. The latest line-up change was when we kicked out the guitarist that played on the demo this winter. Our reason for kicking him out was mainly that he didn't have all the same ideas and opinions as us. He was also quite an asshole to rehearse with."

Tell us a bit about your LP for No Fashion.

"Okay... the LP/CD is titled 'Nifelheim' and contains 8 songs with a total playing time of 38 minutes. There is one song from the demo ('The Calling Blaze') but the rest is new ones. Compared to our demo this LP/CD is much faster, with a hell of a lot more aggression. Also, I guess you could say it's more primitive now."

Do you think you will start to use keyboards, violins, etc.?

"No, we have no plans like that at the moment. I like bands which are trying to capture an original sound using odd instruments but I don't think that, for example, a violinist would fit in Throne of Ahaz. But who knows what the future will bring?"

How important is Throne of Ahaz in your life?

"As a band it's very important to me, but I'm really fed up with all these letters I have to answer."

On early photos I see you didn't wear corpsepaint, but on more recent ones you do. Why did you change your mind?

"We didn't change our mind at all! We had done live shows with corpsepaint, etc. long before these photos were taken. But our guitarist at that time (who is now out of the band) didn't want to use corpsepaint on the photos and we had very little time to take these photos so we didn't have time to argue with him. On all the photos since then we use corpsepaint."

What is your opinion on the events in Norway?

"I find it quite satisfying that someone at last does something against the Christians."

What sort of people turn up at your shows and who have you played with?

"The main part is shiteheads that doesn't understand anything about black/death metal. There is a small circle of 15-20 people who knows what this music is really about. We've only played live three times with acts like Ancient and Nocturnal Rites."

Last words and merchandise?

"Cheers for this interview. We have no merchandise. The demo is totally sold out... don't order it! Our LP/CD should be out this autumn. Check with No Fashion..."



...It was my thirteenth year on a cold winter's day. As I walked through the enchanted forest I heard the sound of horses and men at arms. I felt compelled to walk on and find the place of these sounds. When the forest did clear I was standing on a hill. Before me was a great plain; upon it the armies of the world. Standing. Waiting. I thought to myself, "For whom, or for what are they waiting?"

Suddenly, a gust of wind came up from the north. There appeared a lone rider, holding a sword of steel. Then from the south came another, bearing a battle-axe. From the east came a third, holding a spiked club, and finally from the west a rider who wielded a great hammer of war. With them came their soldiers of death, followed by an army of immortals. They were few in number, but the look in their eyes told all who beheld them that they would leave this day only in victory or death. And there was a great silence. My heart began to pound. Storm clouds filled the sky with darkness. Rain came. The four winds blew with such anger that I held fast to a tree. I watched the four riders raise their weapons into the air. Without warning, screaming their war cries, they led the attack. Down to the battle they rode. They met the armies of the world with a mighty clash. I could feel the ground shake. The earth drank much blood that day. Each of the four was unto himself a whirlwind of doom. When the smoke did clear, many thousands were dead. There was much blood and gore. Their bodies lay broken and scattered across the battlefield like brown leaves blown by the wind. And I saw the four ride together to the top of the hill, while below them the soldiers of death assembled. All those who would now swear allegiance to them. And the four spoke the words of the warrior's prayer:

"Gods of war, I call you
My sword is by my side
I seek a life of honour
Free from all false pride
I will crack the whip with a bold, mighty hail
Cover me with death if I should ever fail
Glory
Majesty
Beauty
Hail! Hail! Hail!"

And as I stood and looked on, I heard the armies of the world hail them without end, and their voices of victory carried long and far throughout the land. But who were those four men? Who were they? They were the Metal Kings!

Manowar